

Summer Festival of Bridge

Wednesday 14 - Sunday 25 January 2026

Daily Bulletin



Tuesday 20th January 2026

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Bulletin 6

Congratulations to the winners of the National Women's Teams: Ruth Tobin, Helene Pitt, Judith Tobin and Karen Creet (not pictured), who won three of four stanzas in the final to claim the title by 39.9 IMPs over Jenny Thompson, Hannah O'Donnell, Linda King and Avril Zets.



Today's Program: **RED DAY**

Tuesday 20th January

South West Pacific Teams

9.45am – 6.30pm, 3 x 20-board rounds

National Under 750 All-Rounder IMP Swiss Pairs

At the Canberra Common

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

National Under 300 All-Rounder IMP Swiss Pairs

At the Canberra Common

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

Today's Celebrity Speaker

Will Jenner-O'Shea

Tournament Tools

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.

9:00-9:30am at the Rex Hotel

Free for Restricted All-Rounder and U750 All-Rounder players



\$5 for all other attendees

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International Performance Information Session

During 2025, the ABF Board established a Task Force to review Australia's international performance and to make recommendations on how we might improve our results.

I would like to invite you to an information-sharing session this Wednesday, during the lunch break of the South West Pacific Teams. I will give a short presentation, followed by an opportunity to ask questions of members of the Task Force, Liam Milne (Chair, Tournament Committee), and me.

The session will be held in the glassed room at the end of the hotel lobby, behind Paul Lavings' stand.

Please bring your lunch with you. We will aim to start as soon as practicable after the morning match finishes. – David Fryda



**BREAKING GROUND.
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**Wear RED today to support
our new sponsor,
the Heart Research Institute!**

RED DAY

TUESDAY 20 JANUARY

Wear **RED** to support
groundbreaking
cardiovascular research



The Heart Research Institute (HRI) partners with ABF

Much like a game of bridge, strong hearts and sharp minds are built through connection, strategy and care over time. That's why we're delighted to welcome HRI to this year's Festival. Their scientists are dedicated to understanding and preventing cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death globally, so more Australians can enjoy long, active lives filled with the people and pastimes that they love.

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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hri.org.au/donate



Heart Research Institute

Did you know cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death globally for both men and women? The Summer Festival of Bridge's new sponsor, the Heart Research Institute, hopes to change that by advancing diagnostics, treatments and cures to improve the health outcomes and quality of life of people with cardiovascular disease.

The Heart Research Institute (HRI), founded in 1989, is an independent, internationally recognised medical research institute performing groundbreaking cardiovascular research. HRI's vision is to save and improve the lives of people with cardiovascular disorders through world-class research and innovation. Their sole focus is cardiovascular disease, which affects both the heart and the broader vascular system.

Within HRI there are 15 distinct research groups, each focusing on different aspects of cardiovascular disease. Their cardio-oncology group involves a collaborative multidisciplinary team working to minimise and prevent toxicity to the heart caused by cancer treatments. The cardiac regeneration team is focusing on finding ways to regenerate damaged heart muscle to prevent the need for transplants by developing flexible patches which can be shaped to fit damaged muscle. They are also working on producing "mini hearts" to test treatments on copies of patients' own hearts and provide medical interventions on a personalised, individual basis.

To take these innovations to a clinical trial stage and continue their research, HRI needs funding. You may have seen Katrina, Andrea and Liz from HRI in the lobby – they are from HRI's Development, Philanthropy and Communications team and are happy to discuss tax-deductible donations, gifts and bequests until lunchtime tomorrow. You will also find a donation slip on your table today and if you click on the Red Day ad in any bulletin you will be redirected to the HRI website where you can donate. Please consider supporting such a great cause. Even small donations make a difference. If you are interested in touring HRI in Sydney to see the facilities and meet the researchers, please speak to Katrina, Andrea or Liz.

Andrea is hosting a Lunch and Learn session today in the glass room at the end of the lobby to provide more information about cardiovascular health, risk factors, conditions and ways to look after yourself. The longer you keep your cardiovascular system healthy, the longer you will live and the more bridge you can play!

HRI has provided an on-site nurse at the Summer Festival to provide blood pressure and ECG testing to participants. Some of the best ways to monitor your risk of cardiovascular disease are to get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked and to have an ECG. If you have a family history of cardiovascular disease it's even more important to get checked regularly. Please feel free to use this service while at the Summer Festival and encourage your teammates and friends to do so.

Women with cardiovascular disease may experience different symptoms to men. Please get checked out and persist in getting diagnostic tests if you think something is not right.

More information will be available in future bulletins about different types of cardiovascular disease including peripheral artery disease. Keep an eye out for it – it might save your life!

If you miss the team at the Summer Festival or if you're following along from home, you can check out HRI's website <https://www.hri.org.au/> for more information.



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AUTUMN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Wednesday 29th April to Sunday 3rd May 2026

Ridley Centre, Adelaide Showground, Wayville

WHAT'S NEW:

- **New format: Teams (Wed, Thurs) then Pairs (Fri, Sat, Sun)**
- **New event: Australian Blue Ribbon Pairs (matchpoints)**
Masterpoints awarded for all scores of 46+%
- **New daily starting time: 10am**
- **PQPs awarded for Open Teams and ABRP Open Pairs**
- **\$20,000 in prize money**
- **Under Life Master events capped at 400 masterpoints,
Under Grand Master events capped at 1,100 masterpoints**

Chief Director: Laurie Kelso

Organiser: Barbara Travis
Email: anot@sabf.asn.au

Early Bird Discount ends on 31st March 2026



Results

South West Pacific Teams (after 3 of 12 rounds)

1 st	Lazer	54.38 VP
2 nd	Dalley	52.67 VP
3 rd	Haffer	51.45 VP
4 th	James	49.93 VP
5 th	Leibowitz	49.60 VP
6 th	Smolanko	48.87 VP
7 th	Moore	48.72 VP
8 th	Smart	48.55 VP
9 th	Doecke	47.14 VP
10 th	Markey	46.59 VP

National Under 750 All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs

1 st	Sachiko Cathcart – Annegrete Kolding	122.41%
2 nd	Sue Cohen – Nicolette Bartoli	106.67%
3 rd	Caroline Marshall – Jane Brougham	105.39%
4 th	Maeve Doyle – Stuart Schon	105.32%
5 th	Deb Beale – Hayley Mitchell	102.95%
6 th	Sam McKay – Kate Elliot	101.82%

National Restricted All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs

1 st	Michael Goh – Bruce Minchington	64.81%
2 nd	Brenda Watts – David Clarkson	63.93%
3 rd	James Batchen – Jim Rothwell	59.29%
4 th	Chris Lamb – Serita Mudford	55.49%
5 th	Paul Birkby – Debra Birkby	54.39%
6 th	Phil Clark – Michael Donnelly	54.30%

Celebrity Speaker Series

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

Monday 19 th January Andy Hung Defending With or Without Signals	 Tuesday 20 th January Will Jenner-O'Shea Tournament Tools	 Wednesday 21 st January Laura Ginnan Decision Dynamics
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!	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.	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.

Correction

Yesterday I mistakenly credited Avril Zets, rather than Karen Creet, as winning the NWT Final under the team photo. The error has been fixed and Bulletin 5 reuploaded. I apologise to Karen who responded with good humour:

Was it just a dream...

I awoke this morning nestled in the comfort of my South Coast abode eager to read the latest musings in the Bulletin and bask in just a modicum of glory. The picture of the winning Women's team included Ruth and Judith Tobin, Helene Pitt and named the missing team member as Avril Zets. My heart sunk... I thought I had been in Canberra for the last five days battling it out at the bridge table amongst like-minded femmes: I thought it was me who had been excited to have made the final – then exhausted after my lack of bridge fitness started to sway my judgement: I thought it was me who mistook my partner's 4NT bid after a pre-empt as a two suited takeout and put us in a 3-1 fit at the five level (6 off vul!), I thought it was me who had to rush off after a celebratory hug with some wonderful team mates.

Oh well, maybe next year...

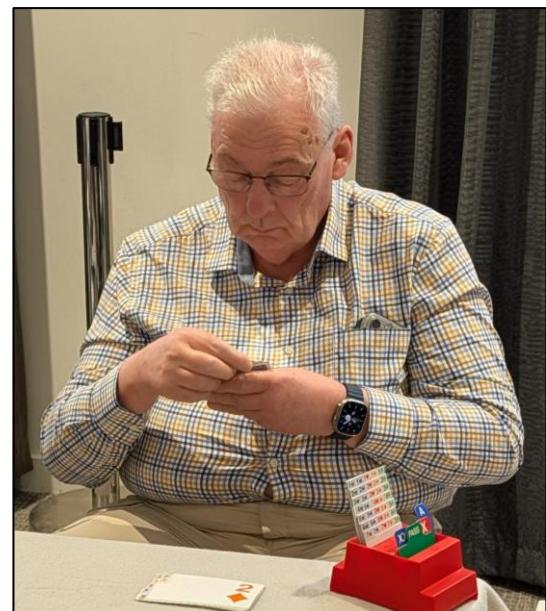
South West Pacific Teams – Round 1

It seems natural to watch last year's NOT winners in the first round of this year's SWPT. Geeske Joel is back at the Summer Festival with a couple of changes to her team: Sartaj Hans and German international player Daniela von Arnim have joined.

It was a grand moment for Peter Reynolds and Alan Watson on board 3:

Board 3	♠ QJ97
Dealer S	♥ J87432
Vul EW	♦ 2
	♣ K2
♠ A654	♠ --
♥ 106	♥ AKQ
♦ Q63	♦ AK1098754
♣ AQJ9	♣ 43
	♠ K10832
	♥ 95
	♦ J
	♣ 108765

West	North	East	South
Watson	von Arnim	Reynolds	Joel
			Pass
1♣	1♥	2♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠ *	Pass
4♠ *	Pass	5♥ *	Pass
5NT *	Pass	7♦	All Pass



Peter Reynolds

Not a regular partnership, Peter and Alan still found their way to 7♦. Peter intended 3♠ as a cue but Alan may have thought it was natural and raised. Peter's 5♥ was a general force and although Alan intended 5NT as 'pick a slam', Peter hoped it was a grand try and happily obliged.

It was a perfect grand – opening lead, see dummy and claim. 23 out of 100 EW pairs made it to grand (including one pair penalising 7♠).

Daniela and Geeske got their moment just a few boards later:

Board 9	♠ 1096		
Dealer N	♥ AKQ876		
Vul EW	♦ A85		
	♣ K		
♠ 872	♠ KQJ543		
♥ 5	♥ 43		
♦ 10943	♦ Q62		
♣ Q8542	♣ 96		
	♠ A		
	♥ J1092		
	♦ KJ7		
	♣ AJ1073		
West	North	East	South
Watson	von Arnim	Reynolds	Joel
	1♥	2♠	3♠ *
Pass	4♣ *	Pass	4NT *
Pass	5♦ *	Pass	5♠ *
Pass	6♣ *	Pass	6♦ *
Pass	7♥	All Pass	



Daniela von Arnim

I thought this was a great auction. Geeske's cue raise at this level showed some slam interest which was great news for Daniela. After she cued in clubs, Geeske keycarded, asked for the queen of trumps (in the process confirming all the keycards by committing her partnership to the 6-level) and then bid 6♦ as 'last train'. Daniela had enough with her sixth heart and singleton club to accept the invite to grand. Only 11% of the field bid this grand slam.

On board 12 Geeske would have been slightly worried about her suit quality until she saw dummy:

Overheard at one of the top tables in the SWPT
(3 of 4 players being seniors):
"Sometimes being hard of hearing is a blessing."

Board 12 ♠ KQJ5
 Dealer W ♥ Q3
 Vul NS ♦ K1096
 ♣ 1054

♠ 62 ♠ A
 ♥ 1096 ♥ KJ74
 ♦ J853 ♦ Q742
 ♣ J976 ♣ AK82

♠ 1098743
 ♥ A852
 ♦ A
 ♣ Q3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Watson	von Arnim	Reynolds	Joel
		1NT	2♦ *
Pass	2♥ *	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	X	Pass
3♣	3♠	All Pass	



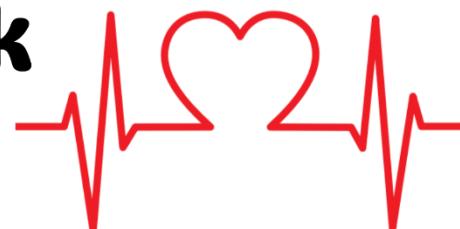
Geeske Joel

Peter is a big proponent of bidding your shape, but he opened 1NT on this one. Geeske had the choice of showing both majors or just spades, and I guess the 6-card suit was too appealing. Daniela's 2♥ was pass or correct, and after Geeske showed spades she was happy to take the push to the 3-level.

Alan Watson led ♥10 – Queen – King – Ace. Geeske cashed ♦A but with no entry to dummy she wasn't able to discard a club on ♦K so made nine tricks.

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 this 3♣ bid in your partnership?
 Is it forcing or not? Why?**

1♥ – 2♣
 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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South West Pacific Teams – Round 2

After watching last year's winners, I moved on to the runners-up. Kieran Dyke and Ash Bach faced Giselle Mundell and Andrew Peake in round 2. The auction on board 8 wasn't one I've seen before but it made perfect sense:

Board 8	♠ AQJ104		
Dealer W	♥ KQ109		
Vul Nil	♦ --		
	♣ 9874		
♠ K75	♠ 98		
♥ J83	♥ 74		
♦ KQJ932	♦ A10876		
♣ 10	♣ AKJ3		
	♠ 632		
	♥ A652		
	♦ 54		
	♣ Q652		
West	North	East	South
Mundell	Bach	Peake	Dyke
1♦	1♠	2♠ *	Pass
3♦	X	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	X	Pass
5♦	X	All Pass	



Kieran Dyke

Kieran would have raised 1♠ to 2, but after Andrew's cue raise, he passed. Once Ash had acted again, Kieran's hand was huge: a likely double fit and an Ace, so he bid game. When Andrew doubled 4♠, Giselle correctly judged that her hand didn't have as much defence as Andrew might have been expecting so she sacrificed in 5♦. The defence cashed two hearts then played a spade through the King, then Giselle claimed the remaining nine tricks.

Kieran made an innovative opening bid that worked stunningly on board 13:

Board 13	♠ AJ875
Dealer N	♥ Q84
Vul All	♦ 74
	♣ 1073
♠ 32	♠ 1064
♥ 952	♥ 7
♦ AQ1096	♦ J853
♣ A92	♣ QJ865
	♠ KQ9
	♥ AKJ1063
	♦ K2
	♣ K4

West	North	East	South
Mundell	Bach	Peake	Dyke
	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Not wanting to compromise his holdings in the minor suits, Kieran made sure the lead would come around to him. Giselle's minor holdings ruled out leading either of those suits, so she led a passive heart. Kieran drew trumps, cashed all his hearts pitching dummy's clubs, ruffed a club and tried a diamond to the King at the end, making 11 tricks. His judgment was impeccable here: North can only make nine tricks in spades, while 11 tricks are inevitable with South as declarer. Unfortunately it was all for naught: Ash had a heart fit, so they would have just played in 4♥ making 11.

Giselle provided a dose of excitement and a great trick 1 play on one of the last boards of the match and was rewarded:

Board 19	♠ 973
Dealer S	♥ J1093
Vul EW	♦ 98532
	♣ 8
♠ Q6	♠ 8
♥ 7	♥ KQ85
♦ A1064	♦ KQJ
♣ KQ10963	♣ A7542
	♠ AKJ10542
	♥ A642
	♦ 7
	♣ J

West	North	East	South
Mundell	Bach	Peake	Dyke
			1♠
2♣	Pass	4♣ *	Pass
5♣ *	Pass	6♣	All Pass



Giselle Mundell

Andrew intended his 4♣ as a splinter but Giselle thought it was exclusion keycard so showed two and the queen. This didn't look good from Andrew's side but he had no other choice than 6♣.

Ash led ♥J. Giselle, without flinching, called for a low heart. Kieran couldn't afford to put the Ace on the trick if Giselle had a void, so he had to follow low. Ash knew Kieran had ♥A and another one, but needed to know which.

This hand demonstrates the importance of having solid signalling agreements with your partner. Kieran and Ash aren't a regular partnership so didn't have an agreement. Kieran played ♥2, giving count. Ash wanted suit preference. He thought for a while – even if Kieran had ♦A rather than ♣A he had to work out whether it needed to be cashed right away. He managed to construct a hand where an immediate diamond switch was required so obeyed the 'suit preference' signal, resulting in disaster for his side as the spade trick ran away on the diamonds.

South West Pacific Teams – Round 3

Ella Jacob has played Phil Markey's Outback Acol system previously, but it's not the sort of system you can pick up and play comfortably straight away. She managed pretty well in set 3 of the SWPT playing with Joe Haffer.

On board 3, Outback Acol propelled Ella and Joe to a great 3NT:

Board 3 ♠ 93
Dealer S ♥ J76
Vul EW ♦ J2
 ♣ KJ7632

♠ QJ105 ♠ K8764
♥ 85432 ♥ K10
♦ Q1085 ♦ AK64
♣ -- ♣ 54

♠ A2
♥ AQ9
♦ 973
♣ AQ1098

West	North	East	South
Newman	Jacob	Thomson	Haffer
			1♣ *
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Joe's 1♣ was either 14-19 balanced or 9+ unbalanced with clubs. Ella showed 5-7 HCP with 6+ clubs, and that was enough encouragement for Joe to bid 3NT. With the heart finesse working and diamonds 4-4, he was destined to make, and on a non-diamond lead he managed ten tricks.

Board 4 provided some comedy:

Board 4 ♠ 1052
Dealer W ♥ AKJ104
Vul All ♦ K4
 ♣ Q65

♠ K ♠ AQ763
♥ 987653 ♥ 2
♦ Q32 ♦ 85
♣ K103 ♣ A9872

♠ J984
♥ Q
♦ AJ10976
♣ J4



Peter Newman

West	North	East	South
Newman	Jacob	Thomson	Haffer
Pass	1NT *	2♦ *	2NT *
Pass	3♣ *	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

Ella's 1NT range was a good 9 to 14, usually without a 5-card major (in my opinion this 1NT opening was a crime against Outback Acol but then again some might argue Outback Acol is a crime against bridge). Matthew showed spades and a minor, and Joe's 2NT Lebensohl could only be a bad hand that wanted to play in 3 of his suit.

On lead, Peter Newman led his longest suit – hearts – and Joe won his singleton Queen. He cashed the Ace of trumps then crossed to the King, then tested whether he could throw some losers away on hearts. Luckily for him, Matthew's singleton heart was useless because he'd only had two trumps, so Joe ditched four losers and made ten tricks!

Joe jinxed Ella on board 11:

Board 11	♠ KJ5
Dealer S	♥ AKQ4
Vul Nil	♦ AQ10
	♣ 1073
♠ 10862	♠ A4
♥ 8653	♥ 97
♦ 743	♦ K865
♣ KJ	♣ Q9642
	♠ Q973
	♥ J102
	♦ J92
	♣ A85

West	North	East	South
Newman	Jacob	Thomson	Haffer
			Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			



Joe Haffer

This 1NT opening showed 20-21 HCP.

Matthew led ♣4, Peter winning with his King, then ♣J held the second trick with Matthew playing the 2. Matthew and Peter play natural signals and it's either count, attitude or suit preference, depending what they think partner needs. On this hand, Matthew needed Peter to lead a diamond through the strong hand, rather than switching to a spade, because that would set up three spade tricks for declarer. With the help of Matthew's suit preference signal, Peter got it right after which Ella had no way to make nine tricks.

Ella made sure that her partnership got the defence right on board 12:

Board 12 ♠ J
 Dealer W ♥ K1094
 Vul NS ♦ AQ10953
 ♣ 64

♠ K1073	♠ A9852
♥ J7	♥ AQ53
♦ J62	♦ 74
♣ Q983	♣ 75
♠ Q64	
♥ 862	
♦ K8	
♣ AKJ102	

West	North	East	South
Newman	Jacob	Thomson	Haffer
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♣
2♠	X	Pass	3♣
3♣	All Pass		



Ella Jacob

Joe led ♣K, asking for count, and Ella showed an even number. He switched to ♦K and Ella, seeing that she and Joe had two club and two diamond tricks, wanted to secure them before being on lead to play a diamond through declarer for Joe to overruff. She overtook the diamond, played a club back, won the second diamond at trick 4, and played another one. Missing the Queen and Jack of trumps, Matthew knew he couldn't do anything about the overruff and had to go one off.

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Senior Moment

Peter Gill

In the Seniors' final I had already complained to the organisers that it was hard to see the cards in a dark shadowy part of the room. Given the outcome of board 6, I should have been grateful.

I picked up:

♠ J9
♥ AQ10875
♦ 43
♣ K76

I opened a vulnerable weak 2♥ which was passed out. The opponent led a small spade to his partner's king, and ♦K was the switch. I had no trouble ducking in tempo because I didn't have the Ace. It turned out to be the winning duck when another diamond was played, low from me who still didn't have the Ace, ruffed with ♥J. I noticed ♥A was actually ♦A at the perfect time at trick 4. +110 for a 6 IMP gain obtained by mis-sorting my cards.

Heath's Big Week

You may have read about Heath Watkins, who last week won the Helman-Klinger Achievement Award and Helman-Klinger Masterpoint Award, two of the ABF's four annual youth awards. On Saturday he qualified for the 2026 Australian Under 26 team and today he played a hand better than about half the field, though he didn't seem to think much of it.

Board 12	♠ KQJ85
Dealer W	♥ K10
Vul NS	♦ K102
	♣ 743
♠ A109	♠ 72
♥ A87	♥ J954
♦ J764	♦ AQ3
♣ AQ9	♣ KJ65
	♠ 643
	♥ Q632
	♦ 985
	♣ 1082

Heath was declarer in 3NT after opening 1NT and having North overcall showing spades (which may have provided him with more information than most declarers). North led their spade honours, Heath winning the third round. Needing three diamond tricks to make the contract but wanting to keep North off lead, he led the ♦6 and ran it around to South. When the diamond finesse worked on the second round, his contract came home.

Nicely done, Heath.

Endplayed!

Joe Haffer reported a nice play by his teammates, Ben Thompson and George Kozakos, in match 1 of the SWPT.

Board 7	♠ AQ2
Dealer S	♥ J92
Vul All	♦ Q103
	♣ QJ94
♠ K54	♠ J108
♥ AK1083	♥ Q764
♦ A	♦ J7
♣ AK65	♣ 10832
	♠ 9763
	♥ 5
	♦ K986542
	♣ 7

West	North	East	South
			3♦
X	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

South led their singleton ♣7 which was won in dummy. ♦A was cashed followed by three rounds of hearts and a diamond ruff. Declarer (either Ben or George) exited a low club from dummy. North had no answer to that.

+620 and +100 (when 4♥ went off at the other table) netted a neat 12 IMPs.

Non-Senior Moment

In the first stanza of the Seniors' final, Peter Gill held this hand. How would you bid it?

♠ 92
♥ AQ
♦ Q62
♣ QJ10854

Partner opens 1♣ and RHO passes. Your options are various club raises, 1NT showing 10-12 HCP or 2NT showing 13+. Peter decided 2NT was the best descriptor of this collection. His LHO bid 3♣ (both majors), partner doubled, and RHO bid 3♥. Confident of a heart lead coming into his ♥AQ and hoping for six club tricks and an ace from partner, Peter now bid 3NT.

♥5 lead – partner held ♦A and ♣AK – so the contract made and Peter's team gained a game swing when 5♣ went one off at the other table.

Spot the Line

Paul Lavings

National Seniors' Teams, Match 4, Board 15. You want to be in 6♦. Over 24 tables, 15 were in 6♦, succeeding 8 times and failing 7.

♠ 943	
♥ AQ104	
♦ J62	
♣ 754	
♠ KQ752	♠ J1086
♥ 732	♥ KJ865
♦ 3	♦ 1084
♣ Q986	♣ J
♠ A	
♥ 9	
♦ AKQ975	
♣ AK1032	

The way to make 6♦ is to win the spade lead with the Ace, cash ♦AK, cash ♣A and cross to dummy with ♥A. Now play a club and it doesn't help East to ruff nothing so play ♣K and exit a club. The defence can't stop you ruffing a club with ♦J and setting up the suit.

Of course an unlikely ♥ lead takes out your ♥ entry and you can no longer make 6♦. The analysis box says 6♦ can be made by North – a heart lead gives you a discard for your fifth club but you cannot get to dummy after cashing ♣A to lead up to your ♣K. It was a mystery.

Peter Gill was walking past so I asked him to make 6♦N on a heart lead. It took him less than a minute. Win ♥10 and cash ♥A throwing a club. Now the key play, ruff a heart taking out West's third heart.

Now run all your trumps except one to reach this ending:

♠ KQ	
♥ --	
♦ --	
♣ Q986	
♠ A	
♥ --	
♦ 5	
♣ AK103	

On the last trump if West discards a club play ♣AK and another and your fourth club is good. If West discards a spade play ♣A, ♣A and a low club. West has ♣Q8 and must win ♣8 and play back into ♣K10.

Legends of Australian Bridge: Stephen Burgess

Peter Gill

Two months ago, Stephen Burgess was eating butter chicken at an Indian restaurant. Stephen had the misfortune to have a chicken bone perforate his oesophagus. After about 6 operations, Stephen passed away in early January.

Stephen grew up in Kaitangata, a mining town of about 900 people in the far south of New Zealand. His father was a miner and his mother had a bookshop. One Sunday when he was about 15, Stephen went to his best friend Gerard Shore's house, but Gerard was playing a card game with his parents and a friend. Stephen watched for about an hour, then went home. On the following Sunday at the Shores' house, they needed a fourth so Stephen filled in, despite not even knowing what the game was. The card game turned out to be bridge.

On the following Tuesday evening, Gerard's parents were heading to the bigger town of Balclutha for the annual Balclutha Bridge Club Championships in two divisions, so Gerard and Stephen decided to go along to play in the second division, with Stephen in theory being a rank beginner. But Stephen's dad banned Stephen from going – studies come first – so Gerard and Stephen missed a lift to Balclutha from Gerard's parents. Then Stephen's mum gave Stephen's dad a flagon and told Stephen to run for your life.

Luckily, Stephen had a 4am job helping the milkman's deliveries, so Gerard and Stephen were able to hitch a ride to Balclutha on the milk cart. Ten weeks later, Gerard and Stephen had won the Club Championship.

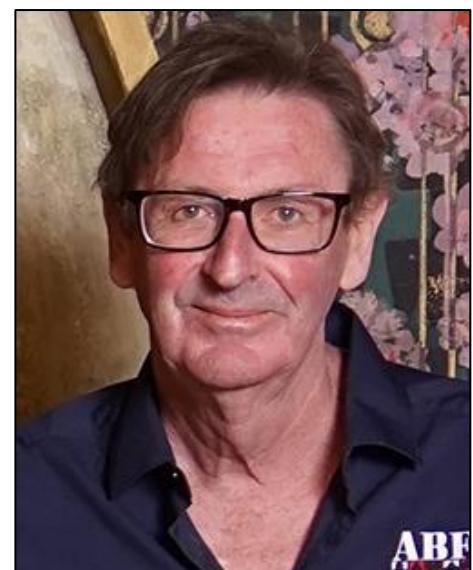
15 years later near Trondheim in Norway, a teenager named Geir Helgemo had to wait after soccer practice for his mum to pick him up. It was freezing cold, with the only shelter being a bridge club, so Geir watched bridge while he waited. One day, they were one short and asked Geir to fill in, playing bridge for the very first time and, like Stephen, stunning the other players with his prowess.

15 years later in Brisbane, 16-year-old Andy Hung started playing a card game called Big 2 with his friends. One friend had heard of bridge. By now, Google existed so that learning about bridge was easier for Andy than our earlier examples.

So if you want your teenager to become one of the best bridge players in the world, now you know how.

Stephen moved to Australia in his early 20s with Paul Marston. In the 1980s, Marston – Burgess totally dominated Australian bridge. Despite being banned from using their usual bidding system, they came third in the 1986 World Pairs. They came fourth in the 1989 Bermuda Bowl against the world's very best.

As an example, at the SWPT in Canberra one January my partner and I were delighted with our plus 41 imps in the datums for our 20-board match against the top seeds. When we scored up, we lost 0-20. Our expert teammates were minus 102 imps in the datums against Marston – Burgess. To this day I've never been plus over 100 imps in the datums for a 20-board match. I asked Stephen if it was his biggest set ever. "Far from it," Stephen replied, "it's our fourth biggest 20-board match so far this week". I checked – he was right – they were a stunning plus 130 imps in the datums in one of their three bigger sets.



Paul Marston wrote about one of Stephen's declarer-play successes:

To defend well at bridge, you have to quickly figure out what is going on. This calls for forming a picture of declarer's hand. This is not an easy task since declarer's hand is hidden but there will usually be some tell-tale clues. Of course, there is the bidding and perhaps a signal from partner, but the most reliable tip-off is declarer's play itself. For example, if declarer in a notrump contract ignores KQJT in dummy, it is a bridge certainty that declarer has the ace. And if declarer plays on one suit, it is normal for the defenders to play on another.

Declarer used that instinct against the defenders on this hand from 1985. I witnessed it from dummy.

Dealer S	♠ KQ4
Vul All	♥ 1062
	♦ 1073
	♣ KQJ10
♠ J1097	♠ 832
♥ AQ4	♥ K9753
♦ A94	♦ 852
♣ 764	♣ 93
	♠ A65
	♥ J8
	♦ KQJ6
	♣ A852

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the jack of spades. Most declarers won the king in dummy and played a diamond to the queen. The West players won the ace and did some counting. It looked like declarer had four club tricks and three spade tricks with the other two likely to come from diamonds. Accordingly, they turned to hearts where they struck gold – the ace and queen of hearts followed by a heart to the king for two off.

Only one declarer did better, my partner, Stephen Burgess, who is one of Australia's best. He won the king of spades in dummy at trick one and played a heart to the jack!

West won the queen and, fearing that Burgess would set up two tricks in hearts, he played ace and another diamond. He almost exploded when Burgess claimed 10 tricks.

Another Australian great, Bobby Richman, who died in 2013, labelled the play the Statue of Liberty. American by birth, Richman borrowed the name from a deceptive play in Gridiron where the quarterback receives the ball with both hands above his head, then places the ball behind his back with one hand while leaving his throwing arm above his head as if he is about to throw the ball. In this position he looks like the Statue of Liberty.

This is not the only time bridge has taken words from sport. In the 1930s, Sidney Lenz borrowed "squeeze" from baseball.

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 just 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 [use our online form](#) to ensure you provide all relevant information. Alternatively, feel free to approach me in or around the playing area and tell your story in person.



Barbara's Daily Column: How Would You Play?

Barbara Travis

You are in 3NT, no opposition bidding, and receive the ♥10 lead.

♠ 6 4 3
♥ Q J
♦ A 7 5
♣ A 8 6 5 4

♠ A K
♥ A K
♦ K 9 8 6 2
♣ 9 7 3 2

You have seven top tricks, so need to work on one of the minor suits. What is your plan?

Are you thinking you should play the club suit first?
Are you thinking you should play on the diamond suit?
Are you trying to find a way to combine those options?

Interestingly, it is superior to test the diamond suit before the club suit. There are two reasons for this:

- (a) the percentages
- (b) the ability to combine your options.

The heart lead will remove one of your two stoppers, given your unfortunate holding in the suit. Therefore, you need to find a line that can cope with losing the lead only once more; after that, the opponents have at least three more heart tricks to take.

Now, let's look at each minor suit.

You hold nine clubs, so the opponents have four cards in clubs. You need the clubs to break 2-2, since the opponents have the K-Q-J-10. The odds of a 2-2 break are 40.7%.

You hold eight cards in diamonds, needing the suit to break 3-2 to create the extra winners. The odds of a 3-2 break are 67.8%.

Most of the time, you don't need to know precise percentages. However, you should memorise this:

- If you are missing an ‘even’ number of cards in the suit, they will break as evenly as possible (e.g. 2-2) less than 50% of the time.
- If you are missing an ‘odd’ number of cards in the suit, they will break as evenly as possible (e.g. 3-2) more than 50% of the time.

Therefore, playing on diamonds is your better option.

On this hand, entries are not an issue so you should NOT duck a diamond. You must cash the ♦A and ♦K first. Should the suit break 4-1 and you ducked the first or second round, you will have no fall-back position. The heart return will lead to your early defeat.

If, instead, you can the top two diamonds and find a 4-1 break, you can revert to your second option – the anti-percentage chance of clubs breaking 2-2.

Of course, if diamonds prove to be 3-2, you continue by losing a diamond trick and establishing two additional winners in the suit.

If you played on clubs first, whether cashing the Ace or ducking a round, any 3-1 break will have beaten your contract, and you have no fall-back position because your second heart stopper has already been removed when you lost your club trick.

This next offering is more challenging:

♠ K 3 2
♥ 8 5
♦ 9 8 7 5 2
♣ A K 2

♠ Q J 6
♥ A K
♦ A 6 4 3
♣ Q 8 7 5

Once again you are playing in 3NT with no opposition bidding, and receive the lead of the ♥J. You have six top tricks, so need to find at least three more. How would you approach this hand, given you are now alert to percentages?

The diamond suit can provide those extra tricks, but that relies on a 2-2 break, only ~41%. However, the spade suit can only provide two additional tricks, though it is obviously a 100% option for those winners.

Once again, the opening lead has removed one of your two heart stoppers, so whatever line of play you opt for must only involve losing the lead once more.

Counter-intuitive as it is, your best line of play is to test the club suit first. You already have three winners in clubs but, should they break 3-3 (odds against, but 35.5%), you have one extra trick. If that is the case, you now need only two extra tricks, so you can play on spades and create your two extra winners, ensuring your nine tricks. On the other hand, if the clubs break 4-2 (or 5-1), you stop playing clubs and fall back on the diamond suit, hoping for a 2-2 break, since you need three additional winners.

Here are the two different hands you are allowing for. Try this play and see how it works:

Option 1

♠ K 3 2
 ♥ 8 5
 ♦ 9 8 7 5 2
 ♣ A K 2

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

♠ Q J 6
 ♥ A K
 ♦ A 6 4 3
 ♣ Q 8 7 5

Once the clubs break 3-3, you play on spades.

Option 2

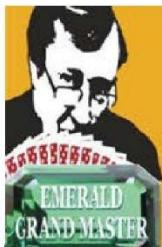
♠ K 3 2	♦ A 6 4 3
♥ 8 5	♦ 9 8 7 5 2
♣ A K 2	♦ Q 10 9 6 4
♠ A 8 7 4	♦ K J
♥ J 10 9 6 4	♣ J 10 9 6
♦ Q 10	♦ Q 7 3 2
♣ 4 3	♣ Q J 6
	♥ A K
	♦ A 6 4 3
	♣ Q 8 7 5

When the clubs prove to be 4-2, you change tack and play on diamonds. (The club trick that the opponents have is perfectly safe.)

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.

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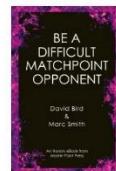
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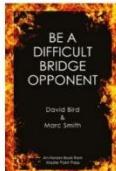
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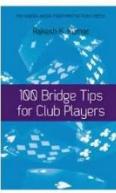
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Australia's Bridge Day Out

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](#).

6♥ is an great contract on this deal – but how would you find it?

Board 4 ♠ J103

Dealer W ♥ J

All Vul ♦ QJ97653

♣ 32

♠ Q872 ♠ A5

♥ AKQ ♥ 10987642

♦ A102 ♦ 4

♣ AK4 ♣ J109

♠ K964

♥ 53

♦ K8

♣ Q8765

West North East South

2NT Pass 3♦ Pass

3♥ Pass 4♥ All Pass

East asked whether there was a better way to bid the hand, and if it was possible to find the slam scientifically. He said that, while he knew he had a heart fit, he didn't know it was so good!

Pete Hollands thinks the above auction is normal and this slam is hard to bid. He commented that West's points are all in great places opposite East's shape, and if the diamonds and clubs were swapped then 6♥ wouldn't be nearly as good. Liam Milne pointed out that this is a 27 HCP slam, and these hands with low HCP but lots of tricks need to be judged very well to get to the optimal contract. He was confident that most players wouldn't be in slam here.

Liam suggested that West could superaccept East's transfer – usually you would have 4-card support to do this, but West has a maximum (22-count) and ♥AKQ so it couldn't get much better. If West jumps to 4♥ saying they have a good heart fit and maximum hand, East now knows about the fit but still only has 5 HCP so it's not totally clear to continue bidding. If they chose to keycard, they would find all five keycards and the trump queen and would obviously bid 6♥.

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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Direct entry to the above ABF Playoffs will be offered to several contending pairs in the Australian Mixed Swiss Pairs and the Roger Penny Seniors' Swiss Pairs. See details on [ABF playoffs website](#)

