

Summer Festival of Bridge

Wednesday 14 - Sunday 25 January 2026

Daily Bulletin



Wednesday 21st January 2026

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Bulletin 7



**BREAKING GROUND.
HEALING HEARTS.**

Red Day was a great success with lots of players donning their red clothes in recognition of the new partnership with the Heart Research Institute.

Thanks to everyone who participated – wearing red, donating, chatting with the HRI team, getting your blood pressure checked and more.

Katrina from HRI has provided more information about KardiaMobile cards for those who are interested.

Katrina, Liz and Andrea will be in the lobby until lunch time today so there's still time if you'd like to have a chat with them.

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Today's Program

Wednesday 21st January

South West Pacific Teams

9.45am – 6.30pm, 3 x 20-board rounds

National Under 750 All-Rounder Swiss Teams

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 Restricted All-Rounder Swiss Teams

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)

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 double in your partnership?

Is it 'stolen bid', values or something else? Why?

1NT (2♣ - majors) X

This system health check is sponsored by the Heart Research Institute. Please support those who support bridge by making a donation if you are able to.



**BREAKING GROUND.
HEALING HEARTS.**

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.





CAHOOTS

WEDNESDAY (TODAY) 21/1/26

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Results

South West Pacific Teams (after 6 of 12 rounds)

1 st	Dalley	105.81 VP
2 nd	Depasquale	91.64 VP
3 rd	Smart	86.61 VP
4 th	Markey	85.12 VP
5 th	Beauchamp	84.66 VP
6 th	Wurth	84.54 VP
7 th	Jacob	83.09 VP
8 th	Smolanko	82.74 VP
9 th	Leibowitz	81.66 VP
10 th	Meier	81.41 VP

National Under 750 All-Rounder IMP Swiss Pairs

1 st	Fiona Fawcett – Jenny Barnes	80.56 VP
2 nd	Marie Pickering – Carolyn Githens	73.13 VP
3 rd	Carol Jeffs – Jennette Rosa	71.21 VP
4 th	Julie Mansfield – Margaret Mahony	70.30 VP
5 th	Kit Meyers – Kerry Rymer	67.52 VP
6 th	Deb Beale – Hayley Mitchell	67.20 VP

National Restricted All-Rounder IMP Swiss Pairs

1 st	Phil Clark – Michael Donnelly	83.25 VP
2 nd	Lucy D'Ambrosio – Shannon Queree	79.40 VP
3 rd	Divyesh Shah – Rina Shah	75.19 VP
4 th	Nicola Meares – Sharon Michael	72.94 VP
5 th	Paul Kirkby – Debra Kirkby	72.34 VP
6 th	James Batchen – Jim Rothwell	72.06 VP

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 19th January

Andy Hung

Defending With or Without Signals



Tuesday 20th January

Will Jenner-O'Shea

Tournament Tools



Wednesday 21st January

Laura Ginnan

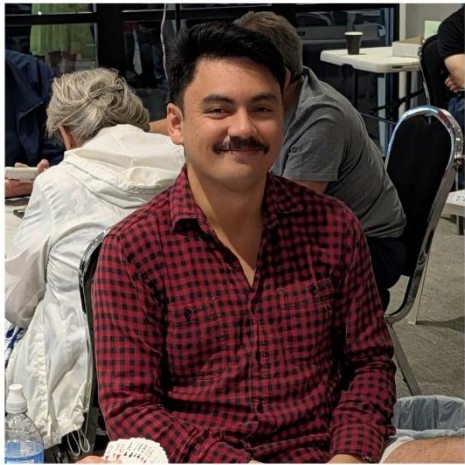
Decision Dynamics

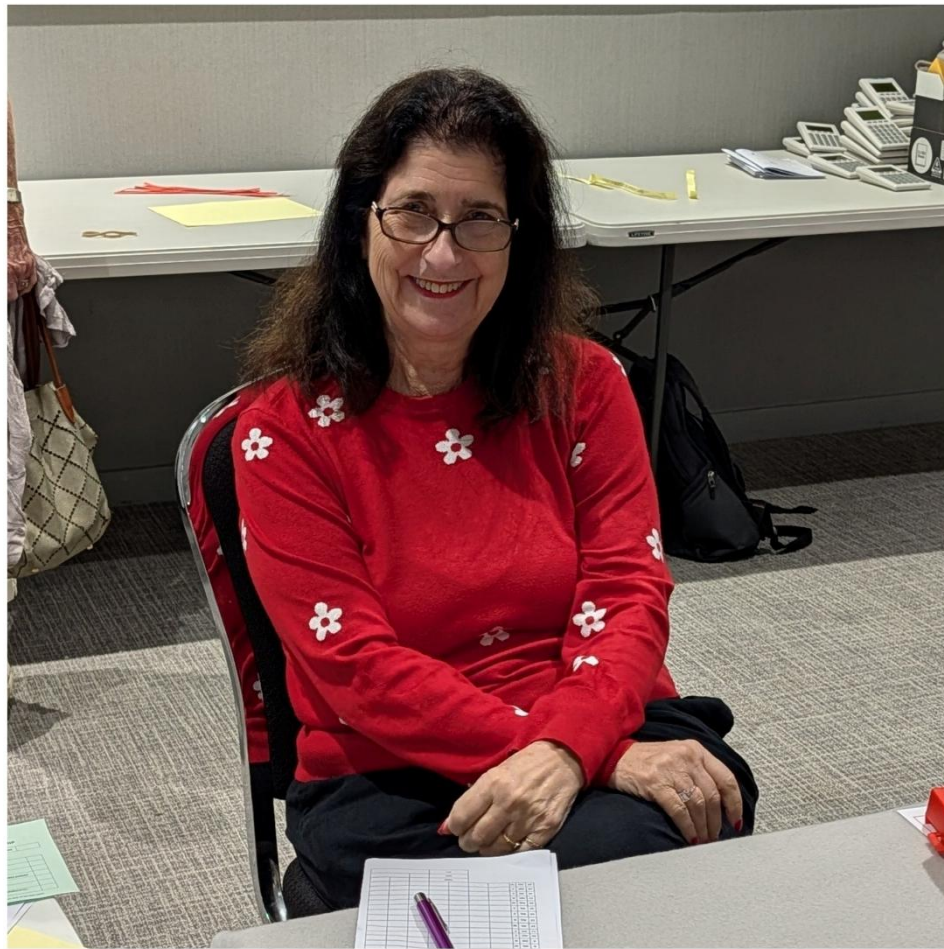


Defence can be straightforward when your partner provides a helpful signal, but there are times when partner had no opportunity to give a signal and you must rely on your own judgment. How do the top players still manage to find the winning defence? Join Andy as he shares some of the hidden secrets to 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.





South West Pacific Teams – Round 4

In pursuit of watching all different teams for as long as possible, I kibitzed the Markey vs Doecke match in round 4. The top two pairs in the TBIB Open Swiss Pairs faced off at my table – Jess Brake and Shane Harrison vs Tim Pan and Lysandra Zheng.

It's not often you're missing all four aces and are cold for 4M:

Board 2 ♠ Q108765432
Dealer E ♥ K74
Vul NS ♦ Q
 ♣ --

♠ J9	♠ A
♥ A92	♥ 1053
♦ 64	♦ AK109872
♣ AJ7542	♣ K8

♠ K
♥ QJ86
♦ J53
♣ Q10963



Shane Harrison

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West	North	East	South
Zheng	Harrison	Pan	Brake
		1♣ *	Pass
2♦ *	4♠	Pass	Pass
X	All Pass		

Tim's 1♣ was strong (14+ HCP at this vulnerability) and Lysandra showed a game force with 5+♣. With nine spades, I don't think Shane really cared what they had.

Tim led ♦K then ♣K, which Shane ruffed. He played a spade to the Ace and King. Another club came back and he ruffed and claimed.

Lysandra picked the trump suit perfectly on board 3:

Board 3	♠ KJ1043	
Dealer S	♥ 3	
Vul EW	♦ 54	
	♣ K10642	
♠ Q8		♠ A2
♥ KQ10972		♥ 865
♦ AJ6		♦ K92
♣ QJ		♣ A9873
	♠ 9765	
	♥ AJ4	
	♦ Q10873	
	♣ 5	



Lysandra Zheng



3rd WBF Online WOMEN'S TEAMS

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West	North	East	South
Zheng	Harrison	Pan	Brake
			Pass
1♥	2♥ *	2♠ *	4♠
5♥	All Pass		

Shane showed spades and a minor (and maybe 4+ points according to Jess) with 2♥, Tim cue raised, and Lysandra was comfortable competing to the 5-level.

Shane found the unfortunate lead of ♠J which ran to Lysandra's Queen. She played ♥K which lost to Jess' Ace, and Jess returned a spade to dummy's Ace. Since Shane had shown a 5-5 and not led a singleton in the other minor, logic dictated he had a singleton heart. Therefore, Lysandra finessed Jess for ♥J, making 12 tricks when it worked.

The whole table was bemused by the auction Shane found on board 14:

Board 14	♠ 105	
Dealer E	♥ AK6	
Vul Nil	♦ KJ53	
	♣ J874	
♠ J2		♠ Q3
♥ QJ10854		♥ 9732
♦ Q6		♦ 9872
♣ Q65		♣ 1093
	♠ AK98764	
	♥ --	
	♦ A104	
	♣ AK2	

West	North	East	South
Zheng	Harrison	Pan	Brake
		Pass	2♣ *
3♥	Pass	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT *	Pass	5♣ *
Pass	5♦ *	Pass	5♠ *
Pass	7♠	All Pass	



Jess Brake

After Jess' 2♣ opening and Lysandra's overcall, Shane passed knowing Jess would bid again and he'd find out more. When she jumped to 4♠ it made the slam auction easy: keycard, find all the missing ones, then ask for the Queen with 5♦. Jess said no and Shane bid grand anyway. Hmm. Since she'd bid 4♠ on her own, he figured she must have a decent enough suit for 7 anyway.

On Lysandra's ♥Q lead, Jess won in dummy and pitched a club. She cashed a round of spades, desperately hoping not to see an honour on her left because then she'd have to decide whether they were 2-2 or she should hook. Barbara Travis pointed out that a cool lead on this auction is a small spade. You can be pretty confident your partner has the Queen and declarer would be pretty hard pressed to pick you for the Jack if you lead one!

South West Pacific Teams – Round 5

Phil Markey and David Appleton are playing Outback Acol with a 9-13 HCP 1NT opening. The East-West cards were the stuff of dreams for Phil in match 5: he and David opened 1NT on 8 of the 20 hands! On board 9 Phil got to use one of his other favourite conventions: a specific two.

Board 9 ♠ J973
 Dealer N ♥ KJ3
 Vul EW ♦ 762
 ♣ K102

♠ 864	♠ Q1052
♥ 10742	♥ A986
♦ A1095	♦ K83
♣ 83	♣ 64

♠ AK
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ QJ4
 ♣ AQJ975

West	North	East	South
Appleton	Bach	Markey	Dyke
	Pass	2♥*	X
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	



Phil Markey

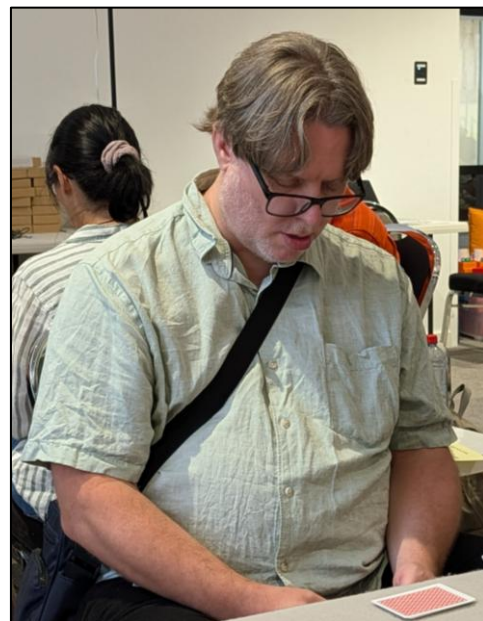
Phil's 2♥ showed 4+ hearts and 4+ spades with 0-8 HCP (very naughty – he had 9 this time). Ash Bach actually does best to pass and penalise but how was he to know partner had a rock crusher? Once he did find out, he confidently bid game in no trumps. Phil led a heart, so Ash established a second heart trick then claimed 10 tricks.

Kieran Dyke and Ash had a simple and effective auction to 6♦ on board 13:

Board 13 ♠ Q6
 Dealer N ♥ 97643
 Vul All ♦ KJ6
 ♣ AK7

♠ K7	♠ 10854
♥ KQJ2	♥ 85
♦ Q	♦ 842
♣ 1098542	♣ QJ63

♠ AJ932
 ♥ A10
 ♦ A109753
 ♣ --



Kieran Dyke

West	North	East	South
Appleton	Bach	Markey	Dyke
	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

On ♣10 lead, Kieran won the Ace and ditched his ♥10. He ran ♠Q to David's King, won the club return pitching a spade, and cashed ♦K dropping the Queen. A spade was played to the Ace, another spade ruffed high, and then the rest of the tricks were his.

Ash got stitched up on the following board:

Board 14 ♠ J1092
 Dealer E ♥ --
 Vul Nil ♦ AJ93
 ♣ AKJ108

♠ K8	♠ Q4
♥ QJ86532	♥ K74
♦ 6	♦ KQ10875
♣ Q72	♣ 65

♠ A7653
 ♥ A109
 ♦ 42
 ♣ 943

West	North	East	South
Appleton	Bach	Markey	Dyke
		1NT	Pass
2NT *	All Pass		

After interference over 1NT, Outback Acol has 2NT Lebensohl for any hand that wants to play in 3 of their suit. David got a bit carried away and decided he wanted to be in 3♥ here – except without interference, 2NT only shows a long minor. Phil explained it as such, and Ash thought for a while but had no real options so passed. Noting Ash's hesitation (and probably assuming his partner had clubs), Phil passed too, which effectively ended the auction as Kieran wasn't going to be able to act.

Phil made a grand total of two tricks – one spade and one heart – for -300 and a very good result on the board.

At the start of the match, Kieran remarked that if not for slam hands (both for and against them), he and Ash would probably be at the top of the datum. They did alright here, though:



David Appleton

See Paul Lavings for all
 your bridge gear needs



Board 16 ♠ KQJ982
 Dealer W ♥ Q5
 Vul EW ♦ K7
 ♣ A96

♠ 1065	♠ 3
♥ 1096	♥ J82
♦ J2	♦ Q864
♣ K10742	♣ QJ853

♠ A74
 ♥ AK743
 ♦ A10953
 ♣ --

West	North	East	South
Appleton	Bach	Markey	Dyke
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣ *	Pass	4♦ *
Pass	4NT *	Pass	5♦ *
Pass	5NT *	Pass	6♥ *
Pass	7♠	All Pass	



Ash Bach

Another beautiful grand slam with a claim on the lead.



Lots of players were decked out in red for the Heart Research Institute's Red Day on Tuesday



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South West Pacific Teams – Round 6

After doubling up on the Markey team in matches 5 and 6 I gave in and watched 1st vs 2nd, a lovely long match between Axel Johannsson – Kate McCallum and Paul Dalley – Tony Nunn. This table of experts played in 2NT three times in the set, and guess how many of those contracts made exactly 8 tricks? (*Answer at the end of this article.*)

On board 2, Paul and Tony landed on their feet:

Board 2 ♠ 87653
Dealer E ♥ 1097
Vul NS ♦ K87
 ♣ KQ

♠ J92	♠ AQ4
♥ KQJ862	♥ 3
♦ 53	♦ AQ94
♣ 75	♣ A9643

♠ K10
♥ A54
♦ J1062
♣ J1082

West	North	East	South
Nunn	McCallum	Dalley	Johannsson
		1♣ *	Pass
1♦ (hearts)	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥ *	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass



Tony Nunn

Tony's 2♥ just showed a weak hand, then 2NT was non-forcing, 3♥ was an attempt to play there, and Paul said no and bid game. When explaining the auction, Tony mentioned that 1♣ - 2♥ would have been about 3-7 with six hearts and panic set in for Paul as he realised Tony might have even less than that. Instead, he got a pretty nice dummy!

Axel led ♣10 – 5 – Queen – Ace. Wanting to establish an entry to dummy, Tony played ♠Q from his hand and Axel, with King doubleton, won. He continued ♠10 which Tony won in hand before playing a heart to the King then continuing top hearts to knock out the Ace. Axel misunderstood Kate's signals on the hearts so switched to a diamond rather than continuing clubs, which took that finesse for Paul. He crossed back to ♠J and cashed the hearts, which broke nicely for him, and the defenders pitched all their diamonds so he took the last two tricks with the ♦A-9.



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*TBIB is the official insurance broker for the ABF
and long-term sponsor of the SFOB.*

Paul and Tony showed why they're one of Australia's top pairs, showing great judgment to get to slam on board 15:

Board 15 ♠ 5
 Dealer S ♥ Q105432
 Vul NS ♦ 97
 ♣ AJ84

♠ AQ104	♠ K987632
♥ J96	♥ --
♦ A3	♦ K652
♣ KQ73	♣ 52

♠ J
 ♥ AK87
 ♦ QJ1084
 ♣ 1096

West	North	East	South
Nunn	McCallum	Dalley	Johannsson
			1♦ *
1NT	2♦ *	3♥ *	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♥ *	Pass
5NT *	Pass	6♠	All Pass



Paul Dalley

Kate and Axel play a strong club based system, so their 1♦ can be as short as zero (but is usually 2+). After Tony overcalled 1NT, Kate's 2♦ bid showed one major. Paul bid 3♥, invitational or better with spades, and Tony accepted the invite by jumping to game. Paul's 5♥ was a general slam try over which Tony bid 5NT to accept the try and explore for grand if Paul wanted to. With two kings, Paul thought small slam was enough so signed off.

Paul found a neat endplay on board 18 which could have been broken up if the defenders had been more aware early on in the hand:

Board 18 ♠ K94
 Dealer E ♥ J754
 Vul NS ♦ 1054
 ♣ A76

♠ J873	♠ AQ1052
♥ 83	♥ A
♦ QJ7	♦ A83
♣ 10982	♣ KJ53

♠ 6
 ♥ KQ10962
 ♦ K962
 ♣ Q4



Axel Johannsson

West	North	East	South
Nunn	McCallum	Dalley	Johannsson
		1♠	2♥
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Axel led ♥K which Paul won. He wanted to be in dummy to finesse spades, so played a low diamond from hand to the Queen which won (marking Axel with ♦K), then called for ♠J which held. Two more rounds of trumps were drawn then Paul was stuck in his hand to play the clubs.

He led ♣K, won by Kate with the Ace, and she had to play a club or diamond through now to stop Paul's plan. When she tried to cash a heart first, he ruffed, led a low club which Axel won, and claimed with Axel forced to either lead a diamond away from the King or give a ruff and discard.

Answer: None (2NT-1, 2NT-2, 2NT+2)

National U750 and U300 All-Rounder MP Pairs



Bruce Minchinton – Michael Goh
National Restricted All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs Winners



David Clarkson – Brenda Watts
National Restricted All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs Runners-Up



Sachiko Cathcart – Annegrete Kolding
National U750 All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs Winners



Nicolette Bartoli – Caroline Marshall
National U750 All-Rounder Matchpoint Pairs Runners-Up

A Defensive Beer Card

Barbara Travis

M3 B10 ♠ K108532

Dealer E ♥ 7642

Vul All ♦ 8

♣ 107

♠ Q964

♥ K108

♦ Q2

♣ K842

♠ AJ

♥ Q9

♦ A10964

♣ AQ96

♠ 7

♥ AJ53

♦ KJ753

♣ J53

West

East

1♦

1♠

2♣

3♣

5♣

I was South. Against a part-score, I'd been planning to lead a trump, but against the game I thought I needed to be more attacking so led the singleton ♠7 - 4 - 2 - J.

Declarer drew three rounds of trumps, then led the ♥Q from hand which I won with the ace. I was actually endplayed, with just red cards! I led a heart and declarer won the ♥K in dummy. Dummy was just where I wanted her to be... ♦Q - 8 - 4 - K.

♥J - 10 - 6 - ruffed - in hand, just where I wanted her to be! ♦A exposed the poor break, partner discarding, but now she was a trick short. ♦10 - Jack - ruffed. Spade to the Ace, ♦9 but I won the last trick - ♦6 led to my ♦7.

And defensive beer cards are worth double!

KardiaMobile Cards – Heart Research Institute

Some of the people who have had their ECG and blood pressure checks have asked where they can purchase the cards. Please see below a summary of details that may be useful:

To purchase the KardiaMobile Card, the Kardimobile or Kardimobile 6L, contact Alive Technologies Phone (07) 5528 4850 or email info@alivetec.com. There is an online store at www.alivetec.com. The KardiaMobile Card will be added to the online store for online purchase next week.

Orders placed before 1pm AEST will ship on the same day with free shipping by Express Post.

Squeezing Partner

Joe Haffer dubbed himself in after match 4 of the SWPT.

Board 3 ♠ KJ1043

Dealer S ♥ 3

Vul EW ♦ 54

♣ K10642

♠ Q8

♠ A2

♥ KQ10972

♥ 865

♦ AJ6

♦ K92

♣ QJ

♣ A9873

♠ 9765

♥ AJ4

♦ Q10873

♣ 5

West	North	East	South
James	E Jacob	Fraser-Hoskin	Haffer
			2♦ *
2♥	4♠	5♥	All Pass

Joe's 2♦ opening showed at least 4 diamonds and 4 or 5 spades, with 0-8 HCP.

Ella Jacob led ♦5 to the 2, Queen and Ace. Jack James ran ♣Q then played ♣J, covered with the King, to the Ace and Joe ruffed.

Joe didn't realise that his partner held vital cards in the black suits and might come under pressure later in the hand. Instead, he tried to give Ella a diamond ruff – playing one right away then rising ♥A and leading a third diamond – but unfortunately she had a singleton trump.

Unlike Joe, Jack James recognised the squeeze potential and ran all his hearts. Ella was forced to either bare her ♠K or throw her club winner, so 5♥ made despite the loss of two trump tricks.

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From the 2025 Archives: A Most Interesting Deal

Kim Frazer

2025 TBIB Pairs - Board 28 Match 8

Dealer S ♠ T4
Nil Vul ♥ --
 ♦ AQ53
 ♣ AKQ9762

♠ J3 ♠ 976
♥ AKT653 ♥ Q92
♦ KJ762 ♦ T984
♣ -- ♣ T43

 ♠ AKQ852
 ♥ J874
 ♦ --
 ♣ J85

After West opens 1♥ (precision style), North has a range of bids available including double, 2♣, 3♣ (if you play intermediate jumps), 3♥ (stopper ask for NT) and perhaps even 4♥ (some kind of exclusion bid?).

At our table, my partner chose the least exciting bid of 2♣, which really understates the value of the hand and it allowed East to bid 2♥, and the auction proceeded:

West	North	East	South
1♥	2♣	2♥	X
4♥	5♣	P	6♣

I wasn't actually very happy with my double, but we play negative free bids, and we hadn't discussed if 2♣ would be forcing in this sequence so to remove the risk of pass, double seemed the best option to ensure another bid.

Anyway, we managed to reach slam and gain a few imps, but I don't think our auction was exemplary.

I polled a few people about what they might bid with the North hand and the most favoured bids were double or 3♥. I personally would have preferred partner to bid 3♣ (intermediate) as this would have given me the opportunity to splinter in diamonds, and now we would be off to the races and now we could cue-bid our way to 7♣.

Only one pair managed to reach the best contract of 7♠ (well done to Dee Harley and rising star from youth week, Heath Watkins) but there were a variety of results on the board which illustrates how difficult this deal was. The players who faced the biggest challenge were those who faced pre-emptive or two-suited openings by West like 4♥ or 3NT (reds or blacks) as they are now entering the bidding at the 4 or even 5 level. Several pairs found themselves saving at the 6 or 7 level, while a fair number of the field didn't get the bidding past game.

This deal is what I love about bridge. It makes bridge so challenging for even the best players and throws up a variety of results that can swing a round for or against you.

Coffs Harbour Bridge Club



COFFS COAST GOLD CONGRESS

11 - 16 AUGUST 2026

Opal Cove Resort Coffs Harbour

Entry available from MyABF after 1 April 2026

Tues 11 Aug	(6:00 p.m)	Cocktail Party
	(7.00 pm)	Walkins

PAIRS

Wed 12 Aug	(0930)	2 sessions
Thur 13 Aug	(0930)	2 sessions

WORKSHOPS

Friday 14 Aug	(1030-1230)
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TEAMS

Frid 14Aug	(2.00 pm)	1 session
Sat 15 Aug	(0930)	2 sessions
Sun 16 Aug	(0900)	1 session

Lunch provided Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday

Legends of Australian Bridge: Michael Courtney

Peter Gill

Michael Courtney is one of a kind – it would take a book to describe the man so this piece just covers a bit of trivia about his background and a few snippets of guidance from the eclectic genius. Michael is regarded as one of the greatest Rubber Bridge players in the world. He is the only player we know to have played over a million hands of Bridge. Just to give you an idea of how amazing this is, Peter Gill is approaching the 300,000 mark.

Background

Michael's Spanish grandfather was a very strong player and a considerable winner at games of Solo-Whist, Auction Bridge and Contract Bridge, for money. His parents were both strong players and made occasional efforts to teach the game to their children. Without the aid of a book these lessons had no effect on our subject, but fortunately his sister, Jill, followed them in every detail.

In 1976 a group of seventeen-year-old chess players in Perth belatedly reached the conclusion that none of them would ever be world champion. Among these was Peter Reynolds, whose parents were regular duplicate players, and he introduced the group to the game of bridge.

The chess background meant that they all began knowing two very valuable things. Firstly, read the books and secondly, study endings.

This was a very strong group to learn in. Both Jill Courtney and Keith Hughes had a complete understanding (in-so-far as that is possible) of the card-play. Michael Millward who had dominated the group at chess, was quick to understand the mechanics of the game.

Almost immediately Leiv Bornecrantz decided to train the group. He did this by preparing deals for them to play, lending them books and lecturing (arguing?) about the bidding.

In 1976 Michael read "Bridge in the Menagerie" and one book by Reese or Kelsey every day, as well as playing two sessions of bridge.

At the beginning of 1977 Michael, Daniel Wallwork & Peter Rogers (the two unmentioned Chesscapees) moved to Sydney with the sole intention of playing rubber bridge. There they were mentored by the extraordinary Paul Lavings.

Daniel and Peter returned to Perth after about three months, but nothing was going to stop Michael from pursuing rubber bridge. Paul Lavings, quite unconvinced that Michael had a future in bridge, for once deciding there were other things in life, secretly enrolled Michael at Sydney University. Michael only stayed at the Uni for a year, but learnt many useful things and remains very grateful for Paul's ingenious idea.

Thereafter Michael played rubber bridge whenever he could and tournaments where his scores would perhaps have been better were he not, like many young players, an outrageous overbidder.



Michael's Style of Bridge

Certainly he is no believer in the popular Bryant McCampbell 4-3-2-1 point count. Secondly his interest in bridge (and logic, jokes and plots) is motivated by the paradoxical way all the rules fail when space or time gets short.

Michael's tips are:

- Play no conventions.
- Play for fun, not to win.
- Study endings
- Read all the card play books you can find.
- Play your hand, bid your hand, let partner deal with theirs

2010 Best Declarer Play in the World

Michael was declaring his favourite contract of 3NT. When a contract is hopeless, Michael looks for a distraction, turning no chance into some chance.

Dealer N ♠ 103

Nil Vul ♥ 64

♦ AQ10875

♣ 532

♠ A98652

♥ J107

♦ 3

♣ Q76

♠ J7

♥ AK853

♦ K64

♣ J104

♠ KQ4

♥ Q92

♦ J92

♣ AK98

West	North	East	South
	3♦	Pass	3NT

All Pass

West led the ♠6. Michael played dummy's 10 and took East's J with his K. Michael knew that if the diamond finesse failed, the contract was doomed.

West's ♠6 lead (fourth best) could not be a 7 card suit (he could see the 4 and 3). Therefore East must have another spade to play back. Michael took the diamond finesse to East's king.

East first cashed the ♥K. West, looking forward to the spade switch, played his ♥J, which denies ♥Q and promises ♥T. East continued with ♥A, and Michael – in perfect tempo – played his ♥Q! Seeing this, West was convinced that East had the rest of the hearts, and continued his unblock by playing the 10. Knowing declarer would not play ♥Q from Q9x, East assumed his partner had started with J1097 and so played a low heart to Michael's ♥9.

Inventing a New Play – the Surround Con

In May 2020, playing an online tournament against Canadian experts Nader Hanna and John Rayner, Michael landed in his normal contract of 3NT after an auction that many of us would not duplicate:

Dealer W ♠ AQ4
NS Vul ♥ K862
 ♦ K8765
 ♣ 8

♠ K5	♠ J32
♥ AQ1043	♥ J95
♦ A2	♦ J943
♣ AQ43	♣ 1052

♠ 109876
♥ 7
♦ Q10
♣ KJ976

West	North	East	South
Courtney	Hanna	Wyer	Rayner
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Hanna led ♦6 – 3 – 10 – Ace. Trying to enlist the defence's assistance – a good tactic when things are desperate – Michael played a second diamond: 2 – 7 – 9 – Queen.

Rayner stopped to think. Michael wisely used the available time to think too.

In the example below, South is on lead. If South leads ♥J, dummy's ten is surrounded and the defence makes four tricks. If South leads the Ace, nine or seven, the defence makes three tricks. That's what a Surround Play is.

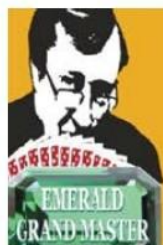
	♥ K63	
♥ Q84		♥ 1052
	♥ AJ97	

Back to Michael's hand. South actually switched to ♣J. What would you play on that? The Queen? The Ace? Low? You've got to be kidding – a low club on the Jack at trick 3 makes no sense.

But Michael played ♣3 on the Jack. Why?

Michael worked out that the expert South's long think might mean that South has ♣KJ9x(x) and be considering playing ♣J as a Surround Play. If so, and if ♣J appears, then if Michael ducks automatically, South would "know" that North has ♣A or ♣Q and continue with a low club.

So ♣J won trick 3, Michael playing low in tempo. Rayner continued with a low club round to dummy's 10. Now all Michael needed to make 3NT was to lead ♥J and see it covered by the King. Alas, ♥K was offside, so Michael's invention of a new play, a sort of Surround Con, never seen before at bridge, had not brought home 3NT.



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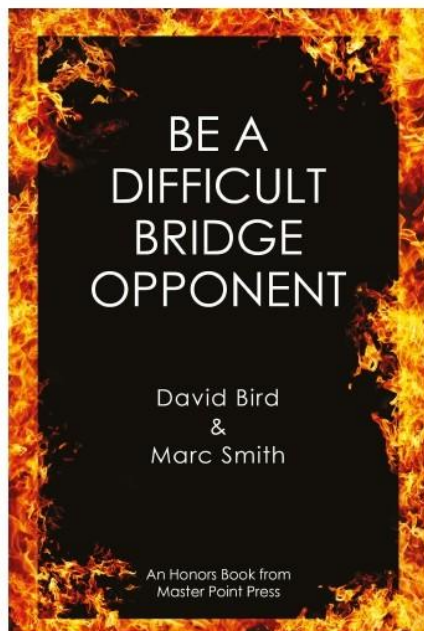
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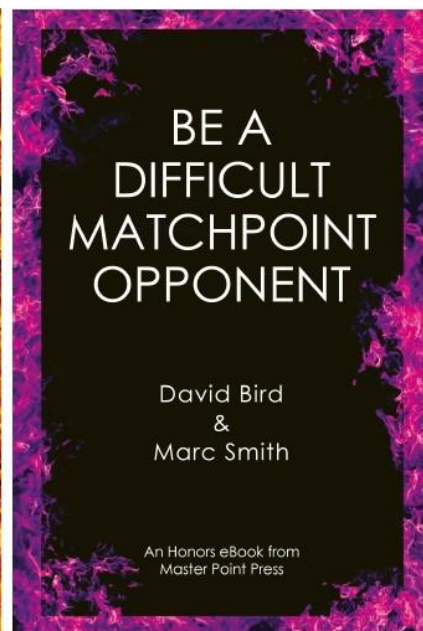
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Barbara's Daily Column: Never Give Up

Barbara Travis

I am continuing last week's theme of not giving up, and trying to find a line that allows your contract to make:

	♠ 6 4		
	♥ K J 10 2		
	♦ K 9 5 3		
	♣ K 9 6		
♠ A 10 3		♠ K 9 7 5	
♥ 8 5 3		♥ A Q 9 7 6	
♦ A 10 7 2		♦ Q J 6	
♣ A 5 3		♣ 2	
	♠ Q J 8 2		
	♥ 4		
	♦ 8 4		
	♣ Q J 10 8 7 4		
West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦ (1)	Pass
2♥ (2)	Pass	2♠ (3)	Pass
2NT	Pass	4♥	All Pass

(1) GF checkback, asking opener to describe her hand

(2) 3 hearts

(3) Showing 4 spades, in case partner has 4 spades; a 4-4 fit will be better than a 5-3 fit

The ♠Q lead was won with the Ace. Declarer finessed the ♥Q, then tried the diamond finesse. I won the ♦K and tried to cash the ♠K (knowing I had two heart tricks remaining). Declarer ruffed the club, then cashed the ♥A, finding the bad trump break.

She crossed to the ♠A to trump another club. She now had 2 spades, 3 clubs, 2 hearts, and needed 3 diamond tricks. So, she just needed my hand to hold the right shape, 4+ diamonds. She cashed the ♠K, then led the ♦J, and crossed to dummy's diamonds. There was nothing I could do but follow suit – just winning the last two tricks with the top trumps.

Never give up – find the shape you need for your contract to make and play accordingly.

Here's a hand from the Gold Coast Congress, where declarer never gave up, despite being in a dreadful contract:

North-South got somewhat carried away in the bidding, reaching 6♦, by North.

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ROOKIE PAIRS	NOVICE PAIRS	THREE DAY TEAMS			GRADED PAIRS	INTERSTATE PAIRS CH'SHIP
		SWISS PAIRS I	SWISS PAIRS II	SWISS PAIRS III		PRESENTATION DINNER
Sat 11 July	Sun 12 July	Mon 13 July	Tue 14 July	Wed 15 July	Thu 16 July	
OPEN BUTLER STAGE 1		OPEN BUTLER STAGE 2		OPEN BUTLER STAGE 3		
RESTRICTED BUTLER		MIXED BUTLER STAGE 1		MIXED BUTLER STAGE 2		
INTRO TO IMP SCORING	MATCHPOINT PAIRS	SWISS PAIRS A		SWISS PAIRS B		PRESENTATION DRINKS



♠ void

♥ 9 6

♦ A K Q J 10 9 5 2

♣ K 5 3

♠ K 10 6 5

♥ A J 5

♦ 8 4

♣ Q 10 9 7

♠ 7 4 3

♥ K 7 4 3 2

♦ 7 3

♣ 8 6 2

♠ A Q J 9 8 2

♥ Q 10 8

♦ 6

♣ A J 4

Obviously, you can see that a heart lead defeats the contract, but declarer's first piece of good fortune was East's opening lead of the ♣6. Trick 1 went ♣6 – 4 – 9 – King. Having avoided the fatal heart lead, declarer decided to learn as much about the hand as possible. He had two options of play – one being the club finesse, and the other being rather more fancy (always the option the experts prefer!). If East's ♣6 was not a fourth-highest lead, then he needed his fancy option...

His first step was to lead all eight diamonds, forcing discards from the opponents. These discards proved very illuminating. It rapidly became clear that West was having discard problems and, in all likelihood, held the club honours.

When the last diamond was led, this was the position:

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

The ♥Q was discarded from dummy and West was in trouble. He had to discard the ♥A, but now declarer just played a club to the Ace and exited with the ♣J to West's Queen, who had to lead a spade into dummy's ♠A-Q!

Declarer never gave up. He found a line of play that would allow his contract to make and played accordingly.

By the way, it is often recommended to make 'attacking' leads against suit slams, although not against No Trump slams. Leading from the ♥K would be considered the attacking lead, hoping to find the Queen or Ace with partner.

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.

Please Be Considerate

- ♥ Value your partner/s
- ♥ Be polite to 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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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](#).

We're taught to respond to opening bids with 6+ HCP. When should you break that rule?

Board 1 ♠ AJ103
Dealer N ♥ K
Nil Vul ♦ A8
 ♣ AQ9543

♠ --	♠ K965
♥ J9765	♥ A103
♦ KQ74	♦ 652
♣ K1086	♣ J72

♠ Q8742
♥ Q842
♦ J1093
♣ --

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	?

Liam Milne says that he would definitely respond 1♠, even if he had fewer points than this South hand. He thinks there are two times you should respond with less than 6 points: when you have lots of support for opener's suit and when you have very little support for opener's suit. On this hand, holding a void in partner's opening suit is a disaster.

On this layout, if South responds 1♠, North will raise to 4♠ and they will get the chance to make game rather than languishing in 1♣.

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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Common Calls for the Director – role play demonstrations
Bridgemates – friend and sometimes foe?

Saturday Afternoon – 1:15pm

Mis-bids, Mis-explanations, Failure to Alert – with work groups
Collecting Information and Ascertaining Facts
Q & A Panel Discussion (1)

Saturday Evening – 5:00pm

ABDA AGM

Sunday Morning – 9:00am

Common Misconceptions in Law and Ethics

Stream A

Unauthorised Information – with work groups
Adjusted Scores – Philosophy and Approach

Stream B

Issues relevant to the New Director
How to efficiently run a session of Duplicate

Sunday Afternoon – 12:45pm

Judgement Rulings – with work groups
Multi-session Events – Design and Execution
Q & A Panel Discussion (2)

Presenters

Jonathan Free (WA)
Laura Ginnan (VIC)

Laurie Kelso (VIC)
John McIlrath (NSW)

Geoff Schaller (VIC)
Sebastian Yuen (ACT)

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