



Bulletin 1

Saturday October 17th

2026 Spring Nationals – Day 1

Day 1 is complete and we are halfway through the **Gumby-Lazer Mixed Teams Qualifying**, the **300+ Masterpoints Swiss Teams**, and the **Restricted Teams**.

The current leaders of the Mixed are the **SYLVESTER Team** (Liz Sylvester – Peter Gill – Cathryn Herden – Matthew Thomson – Natalie Newman – Peter Newman), who are 4VPs ahead of the youngsters **WATKINS Team** (Heath Watkins – Kate Macdonald – Zachary Yan – Lysandra Zheng).

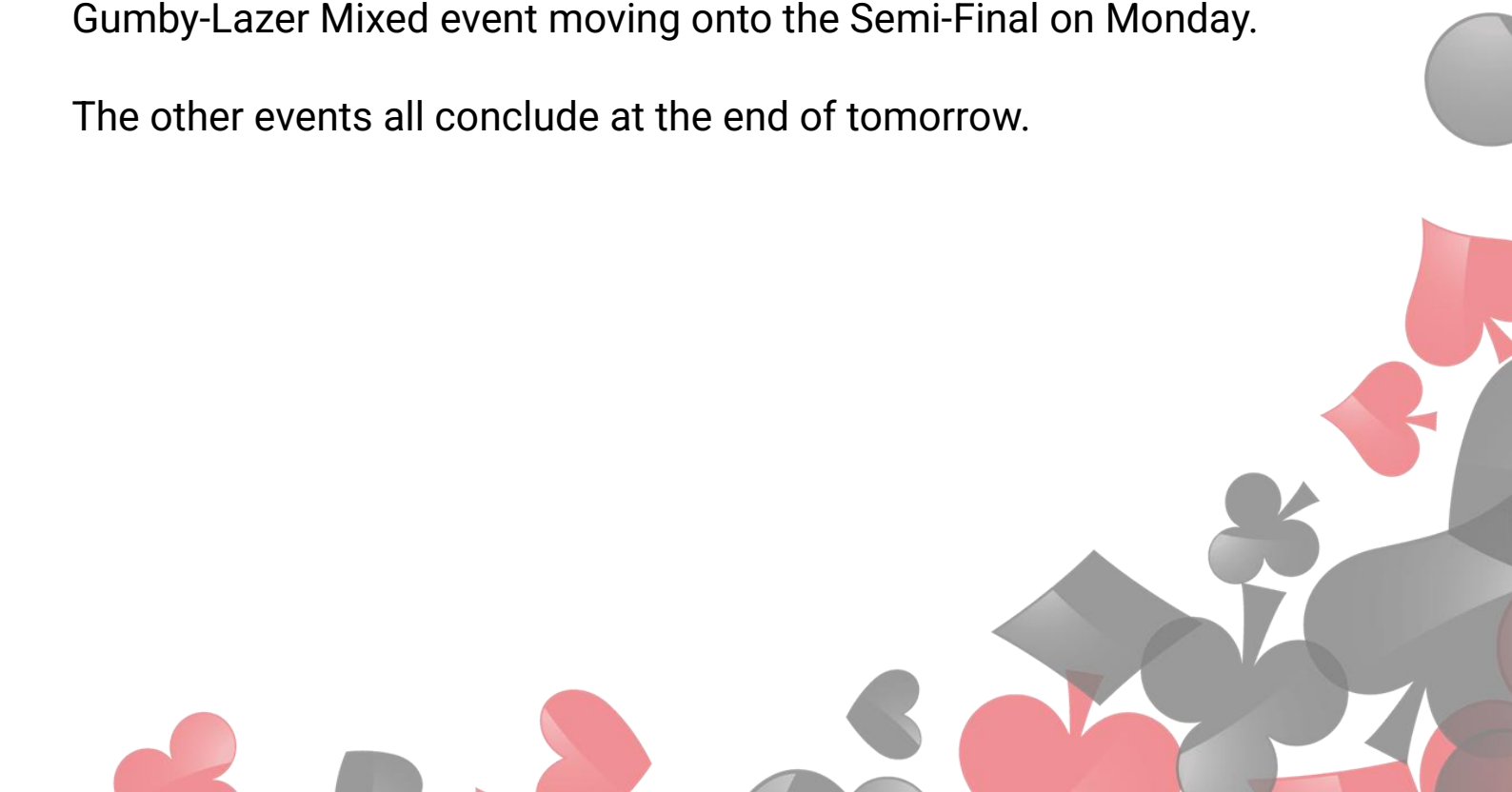
Leading the Over 300 MP teams are the **STEFFENSEN Team** (James Wallis – Kevin Steffensen – Will Jenner-O'Shea – Vanessa Brown), ahead of the **BILSKI Team** (George Bilski – Nicky Strasser – Peter Strasser – Andrew Braithwaite – Ron Speiser – Liz Adams).

The leaders of the Restricted Teams after 4 matches are the **SEYSENER Team** (Lidy Seysener – Bronwyn Neal – Susan Jensen – Simon Hunter – Cia Benecke) who are 1VP ahead of the **GREEN Team** (Michael Green – Lynne Talmont – Steve Marton – Jeremy Trahair).

The full results appear later in the Bulletin.

There are four more matches tomorrow, with the top four teams in the Gumby-Lazer Mixed event moving onto the Semi-Final on Monday.

The other events all conclude at the end of tomorrow.



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Gumby-Lazer Mixed Teams

Here are the standings after Round 4:

Gumby-Lazer Mixed Teams (top 10)

Place	Name	Total VPs
1	Sylvester	62.11
2	Watkins	58.03
3	Beauchamp	51.38
4	Jacob	50.93
5	van der Vlugt	50.85
6	The Handbags	49.20
7	Mundell	48.15
8	Ashton	47.84
9	Zhang	47.01
10	McLeish	46.44

The top 4 teams qualify to the Semi-Finals at the end of tomorrow.



(L-R) Peter Gill declares against Paul Lavings, Liz SYLVESTER and Helen Lavings (McLEISH).



(L-R) Heath WATKINS is playing against Liam Milne, while Kate MacDonald relaxes in Dummy, with Geeske Joel (YOSHKA).

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Over 300 Masterpoint Teams

Here are the standings after Round 4:

Over 300 MPs Teams (top 10)

Place	Name	Total VPs
1	Steffensen	67.93
2	Bilski	56.09
3	Hardiman	50.07
4	Cumming	49.88
5	Weaver	44.70
6	Meyers	41.53
7	Mietzke	40.45
8	Carter R	39.53
9	Drake	38.72
10	Davis	37.20

I didn't get any photos of Team Steffensen playing, even though I was the second fastest table in the room to finish. The whole team was already done.

Jimmy Wallis reported a nice card play technique situation that arose in Match 2 on Board 16.

As South, he was defending 1NT by West, and could see the Ten of Clubs in Dummy.

When he was on lead midgame with the Ace of Spades he led the Jack of Clubs.

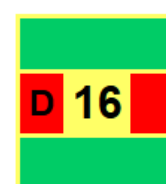
This unusual play is called a **Surround Play**.

The Jack either wins, or pushes out Declarer's Queen. The remaining King-Nine over Dummy's Ten will take the rest of the Club tricks.

Board 16
Dealer W
Vul E-W

♠ K732
♥ AQ43
♦ AK
♣ Q42

♠ JT
♥ 872
♦ QJT52
♣ A83



♠ A54
♥ JT65
♦ 97
♣ KJ97

♠ Q986
♥ K9
♦ 8643
♣ T65

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Restricted Teams

Here are the standings after Round 4:

Restricted Teams

<i>Place</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Total VPs</i>
1	Seysener	52.13
2	Green	51.16
3	MCBISISU	47.75
4	Kelly	39.70
5	Aubrey	25.62
6	Travers	21.26

With six teams in the Restricted, playing an eight-round event, the organisers have found a fantastic movement. They first play a complete round-robin against all of the other teams. After five rounds, they then play a 3-round Swiss (repeating some opponents). This has the combined benefit of being completely fair for the round-robin stage, and then a sprint to the finish! Good Luck to all tomorrow.



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Door Prizes, Puzzle Prizes, Miscellaneous Prizes

Shannon Queree

Today's winners – come and see me (if you haven't already):

Caped Convenor miscellaneous and arbitrary prizes:

Deana Wilson

Bronwyn Neal

Jenny Barnes

Tien Chey

Spot the difference – **Jean Hydleman**

Fixed Income Solutions door prizes – a \$50 bridge credit. This will go into your account shortly.

Daria Williams

Terry Bodycote



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A Slam Missing The Four Ladies

This hand from Round 2 in the Teams had three distinct results.

In the Mixed one third of the field bid 6NT and made it. One third of the field bid 6NT and went down, and the rest played in 3NT (or 4NT) all making their game.

Board 18

Dealer E

Vul N-S

♠ T7

♥ QT7

♦ 85

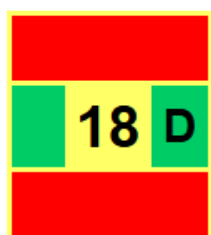
♣ Q97654

♠ AJ62

♥ AK43

♦ 73

♣ AJT



♠ K94

♥ J52

♦ AKJT4

♣ K3

♠ Q853

♥ 986

♦ Q962

♣ 82

Two of the successful Declarers were Sue Lusk, and Jade Wilkinson. One of Australia's most experienced International Women's players, and one of the most talented up and coming stars.

The bidding was similar at both their tables:

West	East
--	1NT
2♣*	2♦*
4NT	5♦
6NT	

After a Stayman auction, West invited slam with 4NT (Quantitative). East showed a five-card Diamond suit (5♦), and West bid 6NT.

On the Heart lead, Declarer figured that Queen number one was offside, so they played the Ace. They then finessed the Diamonds and lost a trick to Queen number 2.

On another Heart, Declarer won the King, and finessed the Spades (Queen number 3).

When they ran their Diamonds, North had to keep the Queen of Hearts, South had to keep the Queen of Spades, and no-one could guard the Clubs (Queen number 4). A successful and profitable Double Squeeze.

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2026 Spring Nationals Open Teams A Simpler, Better Format

Liam Milne – Chair, ABF Tournament Committee

Welcome to the 2026 Sydney Spring Nationals! As we gear up for the Open Teams Championship, I want to let you know about the updated format – what has changed, what has stayed the same, and how it will improve your experience.

We heard your feedback from the 2025 event: the new three-tier structure was a bit too complex, the Plate competition wasn't as highly regarded as we'd hoped, and playing the same opponents more than once was a common frustration. We also heard that retaining a Swiss element is important for many.

In response, the 2026 Open Teams will feature a streamlined Double Elimination format integrated with a continuous Swiss – and the secondary 'Plate' competition has been removed. Our goal this year is to reduce complexity while preserving the best elements of the knockout format, and ensuring you face a wider variety of opponents at your level throughout the week.



Liam Milne



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Here is how the path to the Championship will work:

- **Day 1 (Wednesday) – The Swiss Qualifier:** The event kicks off with a full-field Swiss comprising seven 8-board matches. The top 32 teams at the end of the day will qualify for the knockout stages. Crucially, the top 8 teams earn a significant advantage by entering the "Undefeated" pool (starting with two lives), while teams placing 9th through 32nd enter the "Once-defeated" pool (starting with one life – lose one knockout match and you're back in the Swiss).
- **Days 2 & 3 (Thursday & Friday) – Knockouts and the Ongoing Swiss:** The knockout stages feature 28-board matches (played in two 14-board halves). If a team in the Undefeated pool loses a match, they drop down into the Once-defeated pool. If a team loses in the Once-defeated pool, they drop into the main Swiss competition which runs continuously alongside the knockout rounds.
- **The Weekend – Semifinals & Final alongside the Dick Cummings Open Pairs:** By the end of Friday, the field of contenders will be whittled down to four teams: one survivor from the Undefeated pool who get Friday afternoon off, and three from the Once-defeated pool. These four teams will face off in the Semifinals on Saturday. As a reward for their unbeaten run, the sole undefeated team will carry forward a 7.5 IMP advantage and receive their choice of Semifinal opponent.

I also want to address an area we received a lot of feedback about in 2025, namely repetitive matchups. We don't want you to play against the same team multiple times either, and to fix this we have included a rule in the Swiss that no team will be drawn against a team which it has previously faced in either the Swiss or Knockout Stage.

We are excited about this cleaner, fairer format and believe it will make for a fantastic week of competitive bridge. Best of luck to all of the teams competing this week.

Please pass on all compliments about the format to Shannon, and all complaints to me at tcchair@abf.com.au !

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Wild Hand

Match 3, Board 4 was the wildest hand of the tournament (so far). Seven card suits are quite rare. Less than 4% of all hands you ever pick up will have a seven-card suit.

North was lucky enough to hold a seven card suit, but there were two longer suits at the table.

West held eight Spades (less than 0.5% of all bridge hands have an eight-card suit), but East had them all beaten with Nine Diamonds!

Note that the Diamonds were so long that Matt McManus' fantastic website display couldn't fit them all on the one line with the Diamond symbol, so they dropped down to the next line.

In one table of the mixed, 6♦ X (down 1) by East-West scored up against 4♠ by East-West (down 2) for a flat board.

In most other matches the IMPs swung were in the double digits.

The biggest swing was the match were 5♦ X made by East-West, and team mates made 5♥ by North-South for +16 IMPs.

Despite West holding the Ace-King of Spades, and the Ace of Diamonds, and East having a certain Club trick, North can make 6♥!

East can never lead a Spade, and the Diamond Ace will be trumped.

Declarer can draw trumps and concede the King of Clubs, then discard their Spade losers. South only makes 4♥. Spades was the worst outcome, only making 8 tricks Double Dummy, and often Doubled. East can make 11 tricks in Diamonds.

Board 4
Dealer W
Vul Both

♠ QJ2
♥ AQ85432
♦ -
♣ AJ3

♠ AK987643
♥ T6
♦ A5
♣ 9



♠ -
♥ 9
♦ QJT987642
♣ K84

♠ T5
♥ KJ7
♦ K3
♣ QT7652



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Useful Conventions With Will – Two Over One

The most commonly played system on the internet is **Two-Over-One**.

It has a lot of similarities to Standard: the opening bid structure, overcalls, doubles, and most responses to a minor or two-level opening are identical.

The key difference is the responding structure to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid.

A new suit at the two-level shows 10+ points in Standard, but shows about 13+ points in Two-Over-One and is Game Forcing. You might choose to force to game with 12+ points and a “good” hand, but might not with poor quality suits, or a shortage in partner’s suit.

After a two-level response, your team is committed to bidding game. Both players can take their time in the bidding knowing that the auction can’t stop in 2NT, 3♣ or 3♥, so those bids can be used to investigate the best contract. *In Standard, those bids might be passable.*

What are the benefits of playing Two-Over-One?

The main advantage is that after Opening a Major and the two-level response, both players can use a couple of extra bids to find the best contract.

You can investigate the best fit, No-Trumps, and minor suit slams with no rush.

What are the drawbacks of playing Two-Over-One?

The 1NT response becomes a lot more wide-ranging and can be a bit hard to untangle. I will write an article about that later.

You need to still know Standard responses, since Two-Over-One doesn’t apply in a competitive auction. The bidding reverts to Standard.

If no-one else in your Club plays Two-Over-One, you might need to know more than one system to be able to play with different people. If a lot of players in your circle use Two-Over-One, it might be worth looking into.

Some of these problems can be managed.

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Useful Conventions With Will – continued

Example: 1

♠ KQ982	
♥ Q62	
♦ 64	
♣ J63	
♠ 4	♠ A7653
♥ 87	♥ AJT
♦ AJ92	♦ KQT7
♣ AKT984	♣ 7
	♠ JT
	♥ K9543
	♦ 853
	♣ Q52

W	N	E	S
--	--	1♠	P
2♣	P	2♦	P
3♦	P	3♥	P
4♣	P	4♥	P
4NT	P	5♦	P
6♦	P	P	P

3♦: Since the Two-Over-One response sets up a Game Force, raising to three-of-our-suit can be showing a fit. Since it is forcing, it might be looking for the best contract, or the start of a slam try.

In Standard, after 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♦, West would need to bid 2♥ as Fourth-Suit Forcing, after which, East might angle for No-Trumps, and West hasn't shown their Diamond fit yet.

If West offers Diamonds later, East can't be sure how genuine the fit is, or how interested in slam West might be.

In Two-Over-One, West can show the Diamond fit immediately, and then both players can look for the Diamond slam.

If West was more interested in No-Trumps, they could have bid 2NT with a Heart stopper, or 2♥, Fourth-Suit Forcing, asking for a stopper.*

To make this contract, Declarer will need to establish the Clubs by playing the Ace, and trumping a Club (or two). You can afford to trump high, with such a great quality trump suit.

You need to use all of the Diamonds in the West has as entries to the Clubs, and need to draw trumps along the way.

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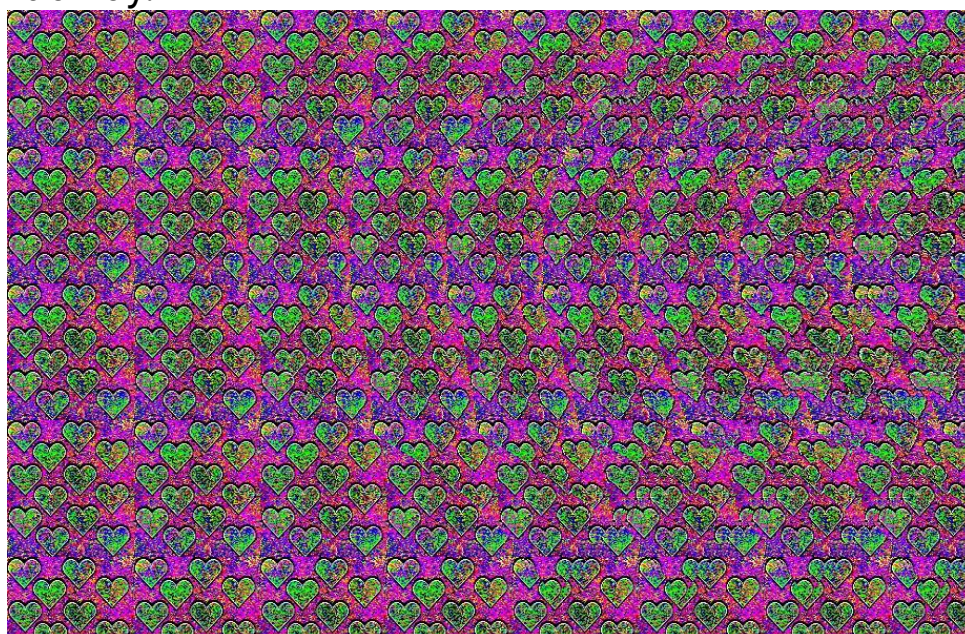
Spot The Difference Puzzle

Convenor Shannon has been busy for the last 12 months. I'm sure that some of that time has been spent on minor details, like organising the event, but some of that time has been devoted to making some fantastic puzzles! Today's was a Find the Difference:



For those people who can see Magic Eye Stereograms (below), you can use the same technique on a "Find the Difference Puzzle".

If you can overlap the two pictures above, the differences become "fuzzy" and jump out right away.



There's a hidden suit symbol in here.

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by Paul Dalley

Ladder

Season 1 · ends 30 November

You have **214** points · 5th ·  King

286 to Ace

1	Alex M		1240
2	Priya S		1015
3	Tom H		640
4	Jenny W		512
5	Sam K (you)		214
6	Marco D		131
7	Helen F		96
8	Liz P		58
9	Andrew G		27
10	Noor A		12

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