

Australian Bridge

NOVICE EDITION



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Some of the faces behind the online Summer School:
Joan Butts, Roy Nixon and teacher Jennifer Kozman

This month:

- Report from the ABF's online Summer School
- How to adjust for the negative cards in your hand
- Andrew Robson on taking all your tricks
- Regular columns from O'Connor, Cohen and Klinger

Volume 4, No 1

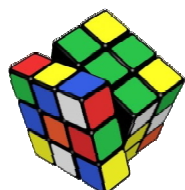
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From the Editor

This month we are welcoming a large number of new readers from the recent ABF Summer School (there is a report on this event on page 6). With so many people joining us for the first time, now seems like a good moment to provide a fresh recap of what you can expect to find in this magazine.

While the bidding columns in this magazine usually contain universal ideas, suitable for all levels of player, the card play problems may contain a wider range of difficulty. In general, the card play problems from Pat O'Connor and Tina Zines are aimed at the less experienced players, while the American authors sometimes branch out into slightly more advanced card play situations. For example, Larry Cohen's column in this issue contains a very basic point about bidding, but the later stages of the play of the hand will require some study (however, the primary lesson of this column is the bidding point).

Ron Klinger has a regular column on opening leads. He gives you a hand and an auction, and you have to choose your lead. Many people think of opening leads as mainly guesswork, but there is a skill in finding the best lead.

Ron's column should be beneficial to players of all levels.

Next we have Danny Roth, who tends to look specifically at suit combinations; everyday problems that will reward players who are willing to put some effort into understanding and remembering the positions. A knowledge of common suit combinations is very important; some of them you will be able to memorise (as you have already done with xx opposite AQ, for example) while others you will learn to work out at the table as they arise. This month Danny looks at K10 opposite AQ985.

Andrew Robson's column focusses specifically on Matchpoints. While most of the bridge that is played in clubs does use Matchpoint scoring, most educational literature fails to truly focus on that aspect (largely because most teachers and authors play primarily Teams bridge). Robson's column points out many techniques for winning matchpoints, some of which are at odds with traditional bridge thinking. If you have access to our back issues, it's worth re-reading his whole series.

We also have several fictional articles. At this time we are mid-way through two popular series: one is set in the Land of Oz, and the other is set in a

semi-fictitious boarding school in London. These articles, especially the Oz series, will contain the occasional advanced play, but this shouldn't get in the way of the enjoyment of the story.

There are also occasional club profiles and other items of interest, such as Joan Butts' report on page 6 this issue, and those rare moments when bridge makes the mainstream media.

Finally, at the end of the magazine there is the Bidding Forum. In this column you are given the beginnings of an auction, and you have to find the best bid. The problem is given to a panel of about 16 international experts who will all give their advice. The experts rarely agree with each other; in most cases, the recommended bid will have support from only about 55% of the panel. Bidding isn't an exact science, but this column will give you some insight into how experts make their decisions – even if they all arrive at a different choice.

If you have any feedback about the articles – what you like, what you hate, what's too difficult, what you'd like us to add – or any other questions about the material, we'd love to hear from you at mail@australianbridge.com

Brad Cole

THIS MONTH'S CARD PLAY PROBLEMS

Entry management

You are South, declarer in 3NT.

♠ 8 7 5
♥ 8 7 6
♦ 7 5
♣ A 10 7 5 4

♠ A K Q
♥ A K 4
♦ A K 3 2
♣ 8 3 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2♣
pass	2♦	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West leads the ♠J, presumably from a holding headed by ♠J109. Spades don't worry you, but you have only eight sure tricks. No suit other than clubs seems to offer the possibility of extras. What is your plan?

Answer on page 9

Advanced finessing

You are South, declarer in 4♥.

♠ A 2
♥ J 10 8 7 5
♦ K J 5 2
♣ J 4

♠ K Q J 3
♥ A 9 2
♦ A Q 4
♣ 7 3 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
pass	2♦ ^{hearts}	pass	2♥
pass	3NT	pass	4♥
all pass			

West leads the ♣K, and continues with the ♣8 to East's ace. East plays a third round of the suit, which you ruff in dummy. How will you proceed?

Answer on page 9

Entry management 2

You are South, declarer in 4♠.

♠ 8 4 3
♥ J 9 8
♦ 7 4 3
♣ J 8 4 3

♠ A K Q J 9 2
♥ Q 10
♦ J
♣ A Q 10 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			4♠
all pass		1♦	

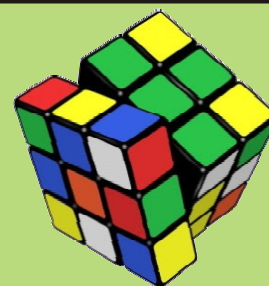
Needing just one good card from partner, South did well to overcall 4♠ – North was never going to accept a game try.

West leads the ♦K, followed by a heart switch. East cashes the ♥AK, and plays a second diamond. North has provided three useful cards – can you use them?

Answer on page 16

PUZZLE PAGE

Email your answers to
puzzles@australianbridge.com



The answers to these three problems will appear in the March issue.

Try the problems for yourself now, and email your answers to us at

puzzles@australianbridge.com

The answers to last month's problems appear in various articles in this issue, on pages 10, 17 and 18.

Bidding forum

Vulnerable against not, you hold:

♠ 8 5 3 2 ♥ A K Q J 10 7 5 ♦ K ♣ 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
------	-------	------	-------

pass	1♠	pass	1♥
			?

Do you support partner's spades, or rebid your hearts?
 And how high do you go?

Send in your call to puzzles@australianbridge.com, along with an explanation of why you made that choice.

Card Play Problem

You are South, declarer in 3NT.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
pass	1♥	pass	3♣
pass	3♦	pass	3NT
all pass			

West leads the ♥Q. How do you plan to play the hand?

It's Your Lead with Ron Klinger

Here are two opening lead problems.

1. Teams, South deals, both vulnerable

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			pass
pass	1♦	pass	2♦ ^{10+ raise}
pass	pass	dbl	rdbl
2♠	pass	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

What would you lead as West from:

♠ K J 10 4 ♥ 8 7 6 5 ♦ 10 4 ♣ J 5 4

2. Teams, East deals, nil vulnerable

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		pass	1NT ¹
pass	2♣	pass	2♦ ²
all pass			

1. 12-14.

2. No four-card major.

What would you lead as West from:

♠ K 8 6 5 ♥ K J 6 ♦ Q 8 ♣ K 8 5 2

Send in your choices to puzzles@australianbridge.com along with an explanation of why you made those leads.

We'll tell you what leads Ron Klinger recommends in the March issue. See page 17 for last month's answers.

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Active defence

Knowing when your ace is running away

By **ANDREW ROBSON**, LONDON

PLAYING TEAMS, your objective is to defeat the contract. At Pairs, restricting overtricks can be at least as important – if it's a standard contract you're defending.

Recognising the time for a "cashout" defence is a key skill of the winning Pairs player – making sure you are not left with an ace in your hand. I recall the very last board of the 2004 World Individual. I was leading versus 3NT and my Bulgarian partner held the ♥A and ♣AK. I led a heart to his ace at trick one giving him the chance to cash his ace-king of clubs; he could even switch to another suit (or return a second heart) and he would win his ace-king of clubs at tricks 12 and 13. At the table, he led a low club at trick two, on the off chance I would score the jack (I was marked with at most one point on the bidding – in fact I had none). That extra overtrick – declarer now made 11 tricks – turned an average into a bottom and cost your writer the gold medal. Ah well. I do not tell the story against my very apologetic partner. I merely tell it to illustrate the importance of not going to bed with a top trick.

Take this deal, West leading the ♥Q versus 4♠. Plan the defence as East.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
pass	1NT	pass	3♠
pass	4♠	all pass	



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

Partner, West, leads the ♥Q. The first point is that you must rise with the ace (of hearts). Partner's top-of-a-sequence lead has told you that declarer holds the king and that card may be singleton. Here it is not, but it is still imperative that you rise with the ace. Fail to do so and declarer will win, draw trumps, run four rounds of clubs discarding his other heart, then lead towards the king of diamonds. 12 tricks and game made plus two.

What should you lead at trick two? Answer: cash the ace of diamonds. You would survive this time if you led a different suit – declarer has only 11 top tricks. But partner could have the king of diamonds and declarer a doubleton queen, in which case the defence will lose their third trick if you fail to cash out. What you cannot afford to do is lead a low diamond at trick two.

Visit our online bidding forum

www.australianbridge.com/biddingforum

Read the readers' answers to last month's problems, and submit your own answers and comments for this month's problems

Cashing your two red aces may seem a somewhat primitive defence, but at least you have not gone to bed with them. What made you sit up and realise the need for the cashout defence? Answer: it was the source of discards in clubs you saw in dummy. If dummy's clubs were ♣6432 and yours were ♣KQ97, there would be no rush, for declarer is not going to discard any of his losers on those clubs.

Quiz: If you were playing Teams and your diamonds were ♦AJ9, how would you defend differently?

Answer: After rising with the ace of hearts, you would switch at trick two to the jack of diamonds, necessary to scoop all three tricks in the suit if the diamond layout is like this:

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

Whether you should defend this way at Pairs is more moot, for it carries with it the not inconsiderable risk that you will go to bed with your ace, should, as on the actual layout, declarer hold the king (and play it, subsequently discarding his small diamonds on dummy's clubs).

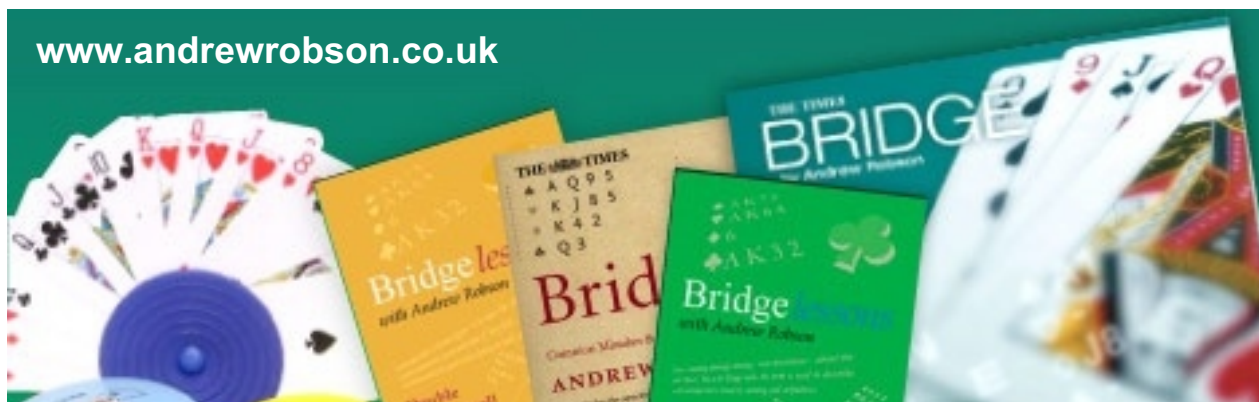
Andrew's Tip:

Don't miss the cashout defence when dummy has a source of discards.

www.andrewrobson.co.uk

First published in *English Bridge*, the magazine of the English Bridge Union

www.andrewrobson.co.uk



Summer school

Highlights from the ABF's online course

By **JOAN BUTTS**, BRISBANE

ARE YOU FAMILIAR with the ABF Summer School? It was a new (free) ABF programme to prepare novice players for the Summer Festival of Bridge in Canberra in January.

This is how worked: Each week for ten weeks (from November 2016 to January 2017) a lesson on a general topic was sent first to teachers, and then, a few days later, to students who registered. The lessons came into players' email inboxes.

Each lesson consisted of notes, a video with a novice player talking through a hand, four practice hands to play on-line, with hints for bidding and play, an invitation to join an online conversation by commenting and asking questions, links to more advanced articles, and a voluntary exam.

The topics were:

- Notrumps
- Opener's & Responder's Rebids
- Major Suit Raises
- Overcalls & Responding to Overcalls
- Doubles & Responding to Doubles
- Strong Hands
- Card Play: Winners & Losers
- Card Play: Techniques to Develop Tricks
- Defence – Opening Leads
- Defence – Signals

The numbers of registered teachers and novice players increased each week. The first lesson was sent to 94 teachers and 909 novice players. By the eighth week there were 104 teachers and 1,342 novice players. Players could register any time and access past lessons at abfsummerschool.com. At the end of each weekly lesson there was a voluntary exam of five multiple choice questions. The answers (sent online) are available for analysis. It's giving us some insights into the way novices think about bridge, and probably how they're being taught. Here are some of the questions, which highlight areas of bidding and play, where answers varied from the expected.



Joan with some of the graduates of the course, gathered at the Summer Festival of Bridge in Canberra

The first question of Lesson 1 (Notrumps) was:

What do you bid after partner opens a 15-17 1NT and you hold:

♠ 7 5 3 ♥ J 8 4 ♦ K 6 ♣ A J 6 4 2

3NT was the right answer, but only 33% chose this. Far more novice players, 58% to be precise, chose 2NT (natural, not a diamond transfer). The other 9% chose 3♣ or other possibilities. I received a few comments on the ABF Education Facebook page strongly supporting 2NT, and asking why 3NT would be chosen with only 9 HCP.

This brings up the idea of evaluating for length (in notrumps as well as in

suits). Won't five and longer card suits generally develop more tricks than four card suits? I specify adding a length point for any suit longer than four cards. Most student texts imply this even if they don't directly state it. I believe it should be made very clear to students from the start.

The hand in question is worth ten points: nine high card points, and one length point for the five card club suit. It's too strong to bid 2NT. Experienced players would bid 3NT because they have memories of languishing in the unattractive spot of 2NT, making nine tricks. (Some players avoid 2NT at all costs.) Trying for 3NT and hoping to



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make tricks with the club suit is a much better goal.

When I set the question it never occurred to me that so many would choose 2NT over 3NT. Maybe less experienced players feel they need more points to bring home the contract? Teachers must show students that there are other factors which improve hands, rather than teaching a reliance on high card points. Otherwise how can we expect students to develop judgement?

Some lack of understanding of modern methods showed up in Major Suit Raises (Lesson 3) too. The question was: Partner opens 1♥ and the next hand passes. What is your response with this hand?

Holding:

♠ 4 ♥ QJ863 ♦ QJ5 ♣ 8652

I thought most students (apart from absolute beginners) would automatically choose the preemptive jump to game with five trumps and a singleton. Around 49% selected 4♥ as the answer, and the remaining 39% chose only 3♥. And the very next question:

Partner opens 1♥ and the next hand passes. What is your response with this hand?

♠ 4 ♥ QJ10 ♦ AKJ104 ♣ K862

I expected the answer to be almost universally 2♦, a delayed game raise and forcing. But only 46% chose this. Most of the others (38%) chose to bid 4♥ with only three trumps. Are delayed game raises being taught, or is showing support in the majors regardless of the number of trumps preferred by teachers?

Here's one from the Overcall lesson (Lesson 4).

♠ 96 ♥ K986 ♦ Q8653 ♣ 96

North opens 1♦, East (your partner) overcalls 1♥, and the next hand passes. What would you bid with this hand?

Almost as many students selected 2♥ (38%) as 3♥ (42%). The correct answer was the weaker preemptive jump to 3♥, showing four trumps. I think most students would consider that 3♥ still shows 10-12 points, and the 38% who selected 2♥ as the answer did so without any doubt about their choice.

Next, on the topic of Doubles (Lesson 5), you hold this hand:

♠ AK62 ♥ KQJ1073 ♦ 2 ♣ A4

You're South and hold this hand. Both sides are vulnerable. What call would you make after the auction begins

with 1♣ from East? There was not much difference between 1♥ (38%) and Double (41%). I'd expected more to select double, but many chose to show the lovely suit. Which works better?

Finally, a question on card play from Winners and Losers (Lesson 7):

The question preceding it had asked what was the maximum number of tricks that could be made with this combination.

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ A J 9	♠ 7 4 3

More players (65%) thought that one trick was the limit of possible tricks, rather than the correct answer of two (35%).

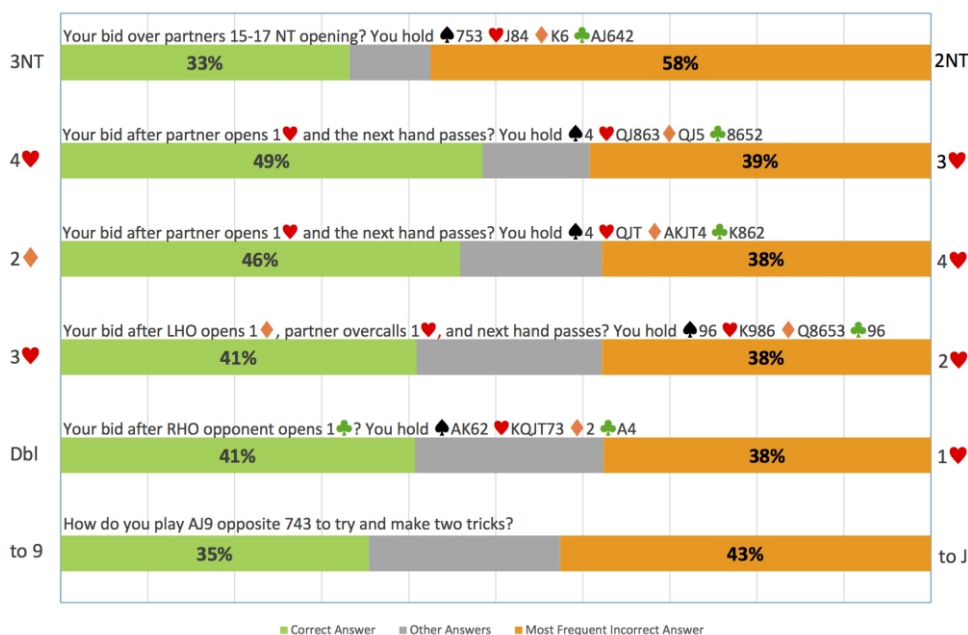
Then the next question was, holding the same card combination, how would you play to take two tricks?

Only 35% selected to finesse the ♠9. Most thought it was correct to play small from South to the ♠J, or to cash the ♠A.

I expected this to be a difficult question, as the majority of students don't learn much about card play techniques and handling suit combinations.

The ABF Summer School has given us much food for thought. Thanks to all novice players (and teachers) who embraced the programme and contributed to making it so interesting. Newer players are the lifeblood of bridge, so the ABF are very keen to hear your views. ♦♦

Interesting Questions from the ABF Summer School



Stefan Götel's unusual contract

When a 4-3 fit is too easy

By **DAVID BIRD**, HAMPSHIRE, ENGLAND

THE HEADMASTER eased himself into the West seat, finding it none too comfortable, and turned to survey the young German master, Stefan Götel. Did he ever allow the Matron to play a hand? It may be how they conducted themselves in Germany, with the stronger player grabbing all the contracts. It was not the British way and never had been.

The Matron leaned forward. "You'll be interested to hear, Headmaster, that Stefan is going back home for Christmas."

Stefan Götel's eyes lit up. "Yes, yes," he said. "I stay with my sister Waltraud and her family, in a small town near Augsburg. You know this place, Headmaster?"

The Headmaster, who had little time for small talk, pointed a finger at the board to be played. No, he had not heard of Augsburg. Nor did he approve of the rather silly names that the people had in such places.

The players drew their cards for this deal:

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

♠ 7 3
♥ A J 5
♦ K J 9 7 2
♣ J 8 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Head-	The	Reverend	Stefan
master	Matron	Benson	Götel
3♠	dbl	pass	4♥
all pass			

The Headmaster opened with a vulnerable 3♠ and the Matron doubled for takeout. Expecting his partner to hold at least four cards in the other major,

Stefan Götel opted for the ten-trick game in hearts. There was no further bidding and the Headmaster led the king of spades.

"I had an awkward bid," explained the Matron, arranging the dummy as attractively as possible. "I should hold four hearts for my takeout double, I realise, but I didn't like to bid 3NT without a full spade stopper. Anyway, I expect you're very good at playing in a 4-3 fit."

"Excellent double, partner," Götel replied. "If we are in the wrong contract, it is my fault."

The Headmaster cashed a second spade trick and switched to his singleton club. "Ace, please," said Götel. "And play the trump king."

The young German master continued with a successful finesse of the jack of trumps. When he played the ace of trumps, both defenders followed suit.

"Ah, well played, Stefan!" exclaimed the Matron. "Just what we needed, playing in a 4-3 fit."

When declarer turned his attention to the diamond suit, the Reverend Benson did not like the look of what was happening. He declined to ruff the third round of diamonds, fearing that he might have no safe return. These cards were still out:

♠ —	♠ —
♥ —	♥ Q
♦ 5	♦ —
♣ K 6 2	♣ Q 10 9
♠ Q 10 9 8	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —
♦ —	♦ J 9
♣ —	♣ J 8

The Reverend Benson gave a rueful shake of the head when Götel persisted with the jack of diamonds. He ruffed with the queen and exited with the ten of clubs. Declarer won with the jack of clubs and cashed his last diamond, discarding dummy's low club. The game was his.

"You were right about the 4-3 fit, Matron," Stefan Götel exclaimed, "but it was the defenders who had this fit, not us!"

The Matron looked blankly at her partner. Whoever heard of playing in a 3-3 fit? "Did you not have a four-card suit to bid?" she demanded.

"I held five diamonds, yes, but the diamond game goes down," Götel replied. "Four Hearts is the only game we can make!" ♦♦

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Test your technique

A pair of common suit combinations

By **TINA ZINES**, SYDNEY

PROBLEM ONE

NORTH
 ♠ 8 7 5
 ♥ 8 7 6
 ♦ 7 5
 ♣ A 10 7 5 4

SOUTH
 ♠ A K Q
 ♥ A K 4
 ♦ A K 3 2
 ♣ 8 3 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♦	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

South's 2♣ is the partnership's strongest bid. In response, North's 2♦ is an artificial negative. The 2NT rebid shows a balanced hand that is slightly too strong for a 2NT opening.

You are South. West leads the ♠J, presumably from a holding headed by ♠J109.

Spades don't worry you, but you have only eight sure tricks. No suit other than clubs seems to offer the possibility of extras. What is your plan?

Solution

NORTH
 ♠ 8 7 5
 ♥ 8 7 6
 ♦ 7 5
 ♣ A 10 7 5 4

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

NORTH
 ♠ 6 3 2
 ♥ J 10 9 3
 ♦ J 6 3
 ♣ Q 10 9

SOUTH
 ♠ A K Q
 ♥ A K 4
 ♦ A K 3 2
 ♣ 8 3 2

The good news is that your side holds eight clubs. You must hope that the defenders' five clubs are split in the most likely way: that they break 3-2. If so (and it's a 68% chance), then even though your intermediate cards are poor, you have the potential to make



two extra club tricks. The power of length! However, you will have to lose two club tricks before your winners are established. Losing when there is a profit to be had is good policy. As you have the other suits well stopped, the defenders cannot hurt you. Is there any snag? Yes, dummy has no outside entries. The only high card is the ♣A. You must preserve that entry until after you have lost your two clubs. Win the spade lead. Immediately duck a club (play low from both hands). Even if West plays an honour, you must resist any temptation to put up the ace. Win the return and duck another club. Courtesy of the 3-2 break, dummy's clubs are now winners, and you have kept the ♣A to get over there. Making ten tricks.

Summary

It may be necessary to duck (refuse to play the highest card) once or even twice to retain an entry to your long-suit winners.

PROBLEM TWO

NORTH
 ♠ A 2
 ♥ J 10 8 7 5
 ♦ K J 5 2
 ♣ J 4

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q J 3
 ♥ A 9 2
 ♦ A Q 4
 ♣ 7 3 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2♦ ^{hearts}	pass	2♥
pass	3NT	pass	4♥
all pass			

North transfers to hearts. With three-card support, not to mention a rather worrying club holding, South is happy to play in a trump contract.

You are South. West leads the ♣K on which East plays the encouraging ♣5 (low = like), and so West continues with the ♣8 to East's ace. East plays a third round of the suit, which you ruff in dummy.

You have already lost two clubs. The diamonds and spades are rock solid. You must recognise that the problem is to avoid more than one loser in trumps even though you are missing both the ♥K and ♥Q. How will you proceed?

Solution

NORTH
 ♠ A 2
 ♥ J 10 8 7 5
 ♦ K J 5 2
 ♣ J 4

SOUTH
 ♠ 10 9 8
 ♥ K 3
 ♦ 9 7 6
 ♣ K Q 9 8 6

NORTH
 ♠ 7 6 5 4
 ♥ Q 6 4
 ♦ 10 8 3
 ♣ A 10 5

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q J 3
 ♥ A 9 2
 ♦ A Q 4
 ♣ 7 3 2

You have no losers left outside of trumps, and there are plenty of high-card winners. You should tackle trumps immediately, to minimise any risk of having those winners ruffed.

The enemy trumps are most likely divided 3-2, for example ♥K3 in one hand and ♥Q64 in the other. Playing the ♥A first won't work, because the defenders will each later make a high trump.

The way to profit from holdings such as these is to take a double finesse; that is, to finesse twice. Having trumped the third club, run the ♥J (lead the jack and play low from hand unless East covers with an honour). This loses to the ♥K on the layout above. Win West's return in hand in order to take your second finesse by playing low to the ♥9 (assuming second hand plays low again). The ♥9 wins, and you can breathe again. Draw the last trump and claim ten tricks.

This play also works if East holds both honours. If West has both, chalk it up to bad luck. At least you gave it your best shot.

Summary

Missing K-Q and small cards, but having strong intermediates, double finesse in an attempt to restrict yourself to one loser.

Three is not enough

Solution to last month's Puzzle Page

By PAT O'CONNOR, SYDNEY

You are South, declarer in 1NT.

♠ 10 8 7
♥ 9 3 2
♦ A K Q 7 6
♣ 7 3

♠ A 4 3
♥ A 8 7
♦ 3 2
♣ A 6 5 4 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	1♦	pass	1♣
all pass			1NT

You have a balanced hand with 12 HCP so you open 1♣. Partner with 9 HCP passes your 1NT rebid, which shows a minimum hand.

West leads the ♣K. How do you plan to take seven tricks?

Analysis

You have six winners, so you need to find one more. From the opening lead it seems that clubs are not splitting 3-3 so the diamond suit is the only possible source of extra tricks. Note that there are no entries to dummy outside diamonds. That is a problem.

You can play the ♦AKQ, and if the diamonds split 3-3 you will make five diamond tricks and eight tricks in all.

However if they do not split evenly you will only make three diamond tricks and six in all. The chance of a 3-3 split is only 36%.

Can you do better? How will you proceed?

Solution

The first thing to decide is whether to duck the first trick. It is normal to duck the first trick or two in notrump because West has probably led from a long suit, and in that case ducking will exhaust East in that suit. However, on this hand you should not duck, because they may switch to another suit in which you have even fewer cards. Clubs are relatively non-threatening – the most West can have is five, and in that case East has already run out of clubs.

So take the ♣A and then play on diamonds.

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

The correct way is to play the ♦2 from hand and the ♦6 from dummy. The opponents will win the trick but you will still have an entry to the remaining diamonds in dummy.

This way if the diamonds are split 3-3 or 4-2 you will make four diamond tricks and your contract. The chance that the diamonds are split 3-3 is 36%, so if you are greedy and try to make five diamond tricks, you will be disappointed most of the time. The chance that the diamonds are split 4-2 is 48%,

so the chance of a 3-3 or 4-2 split is 36% + 48% = 84%.

Here, East still has a club, so he will win the first diamond and cash West's three club tricks, but you will make your contract. If the diamonds were split 5-1 or 6-0 there was nothing you could have done about it anyway.

Key Point

Don't be afraid to give up a trick early. Sometimes it is the only way to make your contract.

Editor's comment

It's not important to know any of the exact percentages listed in this column. The important thing on this deal is to realise that if you play out the ♦AKQ, and they don't break, you will take only three tricks (not enough for your contract). By ducking the first diamond, you are giving yourself an extra chance to make four tricks (when the suit is 4-2). Knowing the exact probability of a 4-2 break is useful, but not essential to the process – all you really need to know is that 4-2 breaks do happen quite a lot, so it's good to cater for them if you can.

If you are keen to expand your knowledge and learn some percentages, it's not as hard as it looks. Here's a simple tip:

**Odd suits tend to break evenly;
even suits tend to break oddly.**

This means that if you are missing an ODD number of cards in a suit, they will break EVENLY most of the time. So if you are missing seven cards, they will be 4-3 more often than not.

If you are missing an EVEN number of cards – for example, you are missing six diamonds on this deal – they will usually break badly (4-2 or worse in this case).

Put that tip in your arsenal alongside "eight ever, nine sometimes" (the popular guideline for finessing a queen) and you will be armed with all the statistical information you need to be a successful "bridge mathematician".



Be aware of minus points

Award-winning bidding advice from a world champion

By **BEP VRIEND**, NETHERLANDS

The BOLS Bridge Tips competition started in 1974, and took place off and on for more than 20 years. During that time, virtually all the world's greatest writers and players contributed their ideas to the series.

In our May 2016 issue we published Mark Horton's tip "Don't Be Afraid To Respond", which is in keeping with this magazine's general philosophy of bidding rather than passing. In contrast, this month we are featuring a tip that provides reasons for taking a conservative view. This tip, one of the winning entries from 1988, was written by Dutch player Bep Vriend, a two-time world women's champion.

This title may seem obvious; every right-minded player will agree that it is preferable to write in the plus column. However, the minus points we have in mind in this article refer to the well-known Milton Work point count. Bridge novices learn on page three of Bridge for Beginners the valuation of four points for an ace, three for a king, two for a queen and one for a jack. Later on they find out that

♠ K Q J 10 x x x ♥ K Q J 10 x x ♦ – ♣ –

has much more playing power than

♠ K Q J ♥ Q J ♦ A x x x ♣ J x x x

The authors solve this problem by introducing the concept of plus points for long suits and ruffing values, and minus points for an unguarded honour. It's remarkable that bridge literature pays very little attention to similar illustrative examples for advanced players. In this article I will discuss two situations in which the vast majority of players go wrong.

Rule 1:

Be aware of minus points in competitive bidding if your side has a fit. In this situation minus points are dangerous, particularly:

- at favourable vulnerability, and
- if you have a spade fit.



For example, take a look at a hand that was played in a Teams match:

W/NS	♠ Q x x		
	♥ A K x x x		
	♦ x		
	♣ A x x x		
♠ A K x x x		♠ x x x x	
♥ x		♥ Q J 9 x	
♦ K J x x x		♦ Q x	
♣ Q x		♣ J 10 x	
	♠ J		
	♥ 10 x x		
	♦ A 10 9 x x		
	♣ K x x x		

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	2♥	2♠	4♥
4♠	dbl	all pass	

The defence was accurate: North ruffed two diamonds and -500 had to be accepted. But the fact that North-South wouldn't have made more than nine tricks in their 4♥ contract was very annoying. No doubt East wasn't very surprised about this when he tabled the dummy. Of course, a more friendly break in spades and diamonds would have resulted in only -100, but, in that case, East-West would take three vulnerable undertricks against 4♥.

So, not a great result for East-West. What went wrong?

West's decision to save in 4♠ can't be criticised; he has a rather weak, distributional hand. That puts East in the spotlight. Well, he has the standard 6-9 points and three or more spades, so no problem with East. Wrong!

East is a point-count addict. Of course, he has 6 HCP but he also has a lot of minus points.

(1) Honours in hearts and no points in his side's suit (spades).

(2) With secondary values outside spades, the hand is better suited to defence.

(3) The favourable vulnerability will inspire his partner to make a phantom sacrifice.

Deduct these minus points and East has a clear pass. If West has length in hearts East is delighted to defend; if West has shortage in hearts he will reopen with a double and then East can bid 2♠. Compare this East hand with:

♠ Q J x x ♥ x x ♦ x x ♣ x x x x x

With this "pure" hand you bid 2♠ without any hesitation, because you welcome partner's sacrifice.

In the next example we will see that sometimes it isn't enough to deduct points, it might also be necessary to give some honours a negative value.

Rule 2:

Be aware of minus points if your overcall is a close one.

Let's compare two hands. It is Nil All, partner is a passed hand and your right-hand opponent opens 1♥:

Hand One:

♠ x x ♥ x x ♦ x x x x ♣ A K J 10 x

Hand Two

♠ Q x x ♥ Q x ♦ K J x ♣ A J x x x

The second hand is 5 HCP stronger and at first sight qualifies as a 2♣ overcall. However, taking into account the minus points, a totally different view arises. With a passed partner a game is most unlikely, and you are making your overcall (a) to compete the partscore, and (b) to get a good lead.

Although Hand (2) has a slightly better chance of winning a partscore fight, Hand (1) scores much better in terms of attracting the lead. Taking the dangers of an overcall into account I would say that making an overcall with the 'stronger' hand is more risky because of the presence of minus points. If an opponent doubles 2♣, then with Hand (2) the punishment might be very severe, lacking so many club honours and intermediates.

What's more, your major-suit queens might even prevent opponents from making a game. Do not count these as two points each. No, in evaluating your hand you should give them a negative value (minus points). It makes a lot more sense and it's less dangerous to bid with the first hand, a "pure" hand.

My BOLS tip:

Bid more with a pure hand. Don't get busy if you have Minus Points. ♦♦

Over the rainbow

Chapter Six: If I only had a heart

By ALEX ADAMSON & HARRY SMITH, UK

"To be quite honest, I am still baffled by the whole concept," the Tin Man said for the third time. "What is a 'social' match, and what is the point of it? Am I not always sociable?" The Lion turned to stare at the Tin Man. "Eyes on the road," said Dorothy.

The Tin Man continued. "Was I supposed to play badly? When I bid a vulnerable game which I expected to make and they sacrificed non-vulnerable was I not supposed to double? Or was I supposed to concede the rest when we had already taken the contract for 1100 and I could squeeze her for 1400 then endplay for 1700? I thought she would appreciate the beauty of my defence."

"That was not the problem, as I have already told you," replied Dorothy through gritted teeth. "No one likes to be told that their worst hand of the season will be immortalised in an article in the district magazine."

"I said I would hide the names."

"You also said that you would have to improve their bidding and her play as there could be children reading."

"That was a joke! True, of course, but any improvements would be to avoid my incisive defence being clouded by the enormity of their inadequacies."

"Yes," said the Scarecrow. "'The enormity of their inadequacies'. That was the phrase I heard her repeating to the tournament director."

The four friends were returning from a friendly match between the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club and their equivalents from Poppyfield, a sleepy town on the main road to the Emerald City.

The match was played between teams of eight. The Over the Rainbow team had travelled in two cars. The match over, Dorothy, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow were with the Lion in his large, powerful, gold coloured car, hurtling back home up the motorway at speeds approaching 50 mph.

"I also do not understand," persisted the Tin Man, "why we did not stay for the buffet. I thought that socialising was supposed to be one of the key elements of this bizarre event. Apart from anything else, I thought that was where part of our table money went."

Dorothy refused to be drawn on this subject. "If you must write an article," she began.

"Oh I must, I promised!"

"If you must," she went on, "then there were a number of other hands which are worth writing up. There were these two hands where you've explained in detail to each of us just how well you played them. They might be a more instructive read than that other hand. It's important that you let people see just how well normal contracts can be played rather than focusing on the defence against a ridiculous one."

Dorothy hoped that if an article was unstoppable then perhaps flattery could deflect it into a less harmful path. The match had been played through a Saturday afternoon with each pair playing four sets of six boards against the pairs in the other team. The first 11 boards had been uneventful. This was the last board of the second set.

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

Each team had two NS and two EW pairs. For the Over the Rainbow team the Lion and the Tin Man were both South. The auction at the Lion's table was over quickly. After a 1♦ opening from East the Lion had doubled. West had passed and the Scarecrow had jumped to 3♣. East, rather boldly, had come back in with 3♦. That had ended matters, though the Lion had felt a twinge of concern that they might have a five-three heart fit.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Scarecrow		Lion
		1♦	dbl
pass	3♣	3♦	all pass

The defence had not gone well. The Lion had led his partner's suit, and after winning the ♣A, the Scarecrow had returned a low club to the Lion's king. The Lion now tried the ♥K, ducked all round. "Has declarer played the ten holding ♥AJ10 hoping he would continue?" he thought, "Well he was in for a shock if he had!" He led his ♥Q expecting partner to ruff, and giving the clear message that a spade return would get his partner a second ruff.

Events did not quite materialise as the Lion had hoped, the trumps providing an entry to the now established 9-8 of hearts for declarer to discard both spade losers. Fortunately the Tin Man was so pleased with his own play on the hand that he hadn't bothered to ask how EW had made ten tricks in diamonds with five seemingly unavoidable losers!

The auction was quite different at the Tin Man and Dorothy's table, where they were playing against two ladies with almost luminous pink rinses.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Dorothy		Tin Man
		1NT	dbl
rdbl	pass	2♦	dbl
pass	3♣	pass	3♥
pass	4♥	all pass	

Over East's off-centre strong 1NT the Tin Man had doubled for penalties. West's redouble was for rescue, showing either a hand which was one-suited with clubs or a two-suited hand without. East was expected to bid 2♣, so her 2♦ rebid strongly suggested a six-card suit. The Tin Man's second double was for takeout. Dorothy's bid of 3♣ showed values and the Tin Man felt he had to press on for game. Over 3♥ Dorothy was in an awkward position. 4♥ seemed to be the least bad option.

West led the ♦Q and followed that up with a second round.

The Tin Man ruffed. The auction had been quite revealing. Unless West was messing around on a 4-3-3-3 it seemed very likely that she was 4-4 in the majors. Unless East's 1NT was an out-and-out psyche then she had to have all the remaining points, including the ♣Q.

If hearts were 3-3 then he could draw trumps and take four hearts, four spades and two clubs for ten tricks. If they were 4-2 then it would seem he had two hearts, a diamond and a club to lose. He played a heart to the jack

and East's ace. East continued with a third diamond, forcing him to ruff again. He had been reduced to two trumps in hand and when he played them East followed to the first but then discarded a diamond.

West now had the only remaining trump but the Tin Man was unperturbed. He led out his four spade winners and two club winners, safe in the knowledge that West would have to follow suit throughout. At trick thirteen he played his third club triumphantly and watched West ruff East's queen. "I had four inescapable losers, as I hope you have observed. I am delighted to be able to lose two of them on the same trick."

The lady in the West seat snorted. "Lucky lie. Still, I suppose there was nothing else for you to play for."

"I beg your pardon," stuttered the Tin Man. "I knew exactly what was going on in the hand."

"So then you will know exactly how lucky you were!" West smiled at him as she got up to move to the next table.

In the third quarter, Dorothy and the Tin Man were up against the Poppyfield Club Captain, and his partner, the Secretary. They found that the concentration of power in as few partnerships as possible made for greatly improved decision making.

Dorothy knew that they were a decent pair and capable of putting up stiff resistance. After a couple of quiet boards they took out their cards for this deal:

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

The Tin Man opened the South hand 1♥. He heard a 3♣ weak jump overcall on his left by the Captain, a pass from his partner, and 3NT on his right. He doubled. After two passes, the Secretary went into a huddle, emerging eventually with a jump to 5♣. The Tin Man doubled that too, and the Captain passed. The key decision now lay with Dorothy.

It seemed to her that every time she held a virtual bust the Tin Man managed to put her on the spot. These opponents were not dummies so it was unlikely that there was a big score coming from 5♣ doubled. She had no way of knowing if it was even going down. She bid a reluctant 5♥, which was passed out. "No double, no trouble," thought Dorothy.

The auction had been:

WEST Captain	NORTH Dorothy	EAST Secretary	SOUTH Tin Man
3♣	pass	3NT	dbl
pass	pass	5♣	dbl
pass	5♥	all pass	

The Captain led the ♣A.

The Tin Man considered the dummy. He could see that they had been taking at best 500 from 5♣ while 4♥ was very likely to be making. Could he make his five-level contract though? On the face of it, given that the 3NT bid seemed to rule out a singleton ♥K, he seemed booked to lose at least a diamond, a heart and a spade.

He ruffed the opening lead with the ♥6 then played off ace-another diamond. The Captain, on his left, flickered when playing low on the ♦10. The Secretary won the trick with the jack and played back a third round of the suit. The Tin Man ruffed this with the nine while the Captain dropped the king. With the defence having already scored one trick, this was the position:

Clearly, the Captain's store of high cards was almost exhausted. Virtually all the remainder were clearly with the Secretary, including the guarded ♥K. There were so many finesses that the Tin Man would like to take by leading from the dummy, but so few entries to get there. Assuming trumps were indeed 2-1, two top trumps would establish one entry but that was not going to be enough – the Secretary was sure to put in a spade honour when he led one from the dummy.

In a moment of inspiration (or as he himself described it, genius) the Tin Man saw the answer. There was one

realistic holding that would give him the contract so he played for it. Giving the Secretary a meaningful look he placed the ♥Q on the table. The jack fell on his left, dummy gave up its two, and the Secretary, with a light shrug of his shoulders, took the king. He tried a fourth diamond but the Tin Man ruffed in with the ten. The Tin Man now played one of his carefully preserved small trumps to the eight, drawing the defence's last one and called for a spade. He tabled his cards. "I am going to play the double finesse. I will re-enter dummy with the five of hearts to repeat it. If you have both spade honours, Mr Secretary, then I have my contract."

The opponents both considered this for a moment then conceded. "Well played, a pretty ending."

"Thank you, if trick five can be called an 'ending'," said the Tin Man, "and thank you again, for allowing me to play it."

"Well, 6♣ was going for 800."

"Oh, no. I mean for pulling 3NT. I would have been endplayed at trick one and forced to give you an eighth trick. A much better score for you. I suppose 'endings' don't come any further from the end than that!"

The Captain and the Secretary felt that for them the end could not come soon enough.

As they sat in the car on the way home Dorothy reflected back on these happy times when her partner had only irritated the opponents – before the painful events of the last round.

They sat in their own thoughts for some time. The Tin Man fell asleep. Ahead of them, the lights of the town began to twinkle.

"You know," said the Scarecrow, breaking the silence, "it's funny, but it always seems to take less time to come back than it does on the journey out."

"Oh, indeed. It's a scientific fact," said the Lion, in his most knowledgeable tones. "It's called the Law of Diminishing Returns."

Dorothy studied his face without success for signs that he was joking. She drew breath to speak then exhaled, closed her eyes, and relaxed back into her seat. ♦♦

The real deal

Bidding your long suit

By **LARRY COHEN**, MIAMI

FROM A knockout match, with both vulnerable, you hold:

♠ Q8654 ♥ A J10985 ♦ A ♣ 8

What would you bid as dealer?

You should open 1♥. It is tempting to open 1♠ (to avoid reversing) but this is not proper bidding. You should start with your longer suit and judge later whether (and how) to get spades into the picture.

Your 1♥ opening is doubled and your partner raises to 2♥. Right-hand opponent bids 2♠. Your thoughts?

There is no "correct" answer, but I think a jump to 4♥ is best. This contract rates to have play, so there is no reason to dilly-dally and risk having the opponents get together in a minor-suit contract. 4♥ is passed back to RHO who surprises you by bidding 4♠.

I know some people think this way: "The opponents have lots of spades, so my partner is short in spades. I can ruff spades in dummy, therefore, and do very well in hearts." Bad thinking. You won't be able to ruff all of those spades, and meanwhile, they will be great on defense. Another way to think of it is to use the Law of Total Tricks. Even if partner is void in spades, the opponents have only eight trumps. Your side probably has nine trumps, a total of 17, indicating 17 tricks. If you were to bid on to 5♥, contracting for 11 tricks, that means the opponents would have only six tricks their way. With both sides vulnerable, why try for 650 when you might have 1100? So, you should double 4♠ (as I did at the table). Everyone passes and it's your lead.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	dbl	2♥	2♠
4♥	pass	pass	4♠
dbl	all pass		

With long trumps, your plan should not be to get ruffs. Instead, you should try to shorten declarer's trumps.



Accordingly, you lay down the ♥A and see what should be a disappointing dummy for the declarer:

♠ 1092
♥ K2
♦ KJ98
♣ KQ65

♠ Q8654
♥ A J10985
♦ A
♣ 8

	N	
W		E
	S	

I'm an aggressive takeout doubler, but I think this North hand is just not enough (change the ♣5 to the ♠5 and then I would double).

After taking your ♥A, you continue the heart attack and declarer follows with the queen. He plays the ♠10 off dummy and your partner follows. This is a pleasant development – you now know that you have more trumps than declarer. Declarer plays low, and you win the ♠Q. Now what?

You shouldn't play more hearts yet. Declarer will ruff in dummy – you'd be giving him a free trick. You already have control, and the best way to extract the maximum penalty is to return a trump. Your partner throws an encouraging club.

Declarer started with the ♥Q and the ♠AKJ. You know your partner has the ♣A (without that card, he would not have been strong enough to bid 2♥).

What can declarer do now? If he draws trumps, your side will have the rest. If he plays a diamond, you will win the ace and play a third round of trumps. Dummy will be out of trumps. You will have the long trumps and running hearts. All declarer will get is his three high trumps. On the Real Deal, declarer played a club at trick five to partner's ace. I knew if partner played a diamond, I would have a defensive claim. Partner, bless him, worked it out. He played a diamond and I showed my

cards. "I'm playing a spade, down six," I said. (The opponents were good enough players to quickly see and accept the claim.)

♠ 1092
♥ K2
♦ KJ98
♣ KQ65

♠ Q8654
♥ A J10985
♦ A
♣ 8

♠ 3
♥ 763
♦ 10743
♣ A J742

♠ AKJ7
♥ Q4
♦ Q652
♣ 1093

Plus 1700 gave us an 18-imp gain because the player with my hand at the other table made a surprising error. A man with 8000 masterpoints incorrectly opened 1♠. What happened next? Pass-pass-pass, down two, minus 200. I suppose it was good for him that his disaster (unless there is a trump lead, he can make 620 in 4♥) came on the same board that his teammates went for 1700. Still, one cannot afford too many such adventures. ♦♦

Special terms used in this article

A reverse is when opener's 2nd bid is higher than a two-level rebid in his first suit. On this deal, if West were to open 1♥ and rebid 2♠, that would be a reverse. By bidding above 2♥, West is forcing the bidding to the three-level, which typically requires extra values. This is why some players might (wrongly) consider opening 1♠ instead of 1♥ – they are not strong enough to rebid 2♠ after a 1♥ opening, so they are afraid of losing the spade suit.

The Law of Total Tricks is a theory that says there is a link between the number of trumps and the number of tricks available on any given deal. On this deal, EW have nine trumps and NS have seven, for a total of 16. If the theory is accurate, there will be 16 total tricks available on the deal (for example, EW will make 2♥ and NS will make 2♠, or EW will make 3♥ and NS will make 1♠). On the actual deal, NS made four tricks and EW would have made nine in 5♥ – a total of 13, three short of the expectation. This is fairly normal; when both sides have values in the opponents' suit, the theory is often inaccurate.

The danger hand

Keeping the dangerous opponent off lead

By **MIKE LAWRENCE**, NASHVILLE

How do you decide whether to take a trick or hold up?

Winning is more fun than losing, but there are times when you have to bite the bullet for a moment in order to get a larger reward later.

Considering the theme of this series, I'm expecting you to get this one right. For this discussion, your job is not to find the correct play. Your mission is to describe the reasons for it.

♠ A J 5 3
♥ K J 7
♦ Q 7
♣ A Q 9 5

♠ K Q 10 9 4 2
♥ 9 3
♦ A 5
♣ J 10 4

With no one vulnerable, you open 2♠ in first seat, and your partner raises to game. East asks what the 2♠ bid means and is told that it is weak. East mulls this over for just a flicker of time and passes. West leads the ♦2. How do you play and – more important – why?

Here is how the play continues. You play the ♦Q from dummy. There is a decent chance that West led from the ♦K. East disappoints you by covering the ♦Q with the king. Now what?

Here is what did happen. South won the trick and drew trumps, finding East with a void. South then led the ♣J for a finesse. East won the ♣K and played a diamond to West, who switched to a heart. Now you have to guess which heart to play from dummy.

Don't bother. East is smiling, and that can mean only one thing – he has the ♥A and ♥Q. South is down one.

Here is the full deal. Was South destined to go down, or is this a makeable contract?



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

♦ K Q 10 9 4 2	
♣ 9 3	
♦ A 5	
♣ J 10 4	

The contract is cold with any lead. Given the diamond lead, South sanely tried the ♦Q and East covered it. No harm done, as long as South does not play his ace.

When you are playing a contract, a question that you need to learn to ask is, "What can go wrong?" The need to ask this question is most important when things look easy. On this deal, you might be thinking to yourself that 4♠ does look easy. What can go wrong, however, is that if the ♦K is over the queen and the ♣K is offside, there may be a problem in hearts.

The solution is to avoid one of the possible problems, and the way to do

that is to let East have the first diamond. You can then draw trumps and set up the club suit for a heart discard later. The difference is that West cannot get in to lead a heart.

Bidding note: Look at the East hand. What would you bid if the bidding went 2♠ on your left and 4♠ on your right? In this case, you are not vulnerable, so the price of bidding won't be too high. You probably should take some action. Double is the likely choice, and your partner will judge what to do on the assumption that your double is for takeout. This means that if you have a hand such as

♠ A K J 10 ♥ 4 3 ♦ A 8 7 4 2 ♣ Q J

you must pass 4♠. As long as you accept that you will have ten times as many takeout double hands as you will penalty double hands, you will reserve the double for takeout.

Note that on the actual layout, East-West can make 3♦. That means down two in 5♦.

Here is a friendlier layout. Say you double 4♠ and your partner bids 5♣, a possible choice.

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

If partner has the hand on the left, he will make for sure and may make 12 or 13. The point of this is that if you have good shape, you should consider bidding. ♦♦

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Phone: 02 9967 0644

Counting at Bridge with Mike Lawrence
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Roth on play

Another way to keep the dangerous opponent off lead

By **DANNY ROTH**, LONDON

Dealer East, NS vulnerable.

♠ 8 6 2
♥ A Q 9 8 5
♦ 7 6 2
♣ A K

♠ Q 10 9
♥ K 10
♦ A K 4 3
♣ Q 8 7 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	2♥	pass	1♣
pass	3NT	pass	2NT
		all pass	

West leads the ♠A, all following, and shifts to the ♣2. Plan the play.

SOLUTION

We have three club tricks and two diamonds on top. There will be no spade trick unless West leads them again, which implies the need for four heart tricks of which we have three on top. Before deciding our line of play, we must look at each suit in more detail. In spades, West's overcall has suggested at least five and we note that, if he has six, East will have played a singleton to the first trick and our queen cannot profitably be attacked. The dangerous position arises when West has five and East a doubleton. Now, if East ever gets on play, a spade from his side through our Q10 could give West four more tricks in the suit.

For that reason, we can almost rule out the possibility of a third trick in diamonds. The suit would need to break 3-3 and West would have to win the third round, implying that he would have to be credited with ♦QJ10 (if East has any one of those cards, West can ensure that East wins a trick with it).

We should therefore concentrate on that heart suit. If it breaks 3-3, there is no problem – we have five tricks automatically. However, if it breaks

unevenly and the jack is with the length, a trick will have to be lost before the long card can be enjoyed. It will be safe to lose a heart trick, provided it is to West. For that reason, on winning the club, we should play a small heart, intending to insert our ten if East plays low.

The deal:

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

On the above layout, the ten will hold and we can now cash the king, cross back to dummy in clubs and cash the rest of the suit, followed by the top diamonds and the ♣Q to total ten tricks. If West proves to have the ♥J and he plays a second club, dummy wins and now we avoid blocking the heart suit by playing the ace, swallowing our king, and the remainder of the suit is good.

For advanced readers

The alert student will note that, because of the shortage of entries to dummy, this safety play in hearts is not available if we exchange the positions of the ace and king of hearts.

The expert reader will also note that, even if he plays hearts in the normal manner, starting with the king and then the ace and queen, he can, as the cards lie, still save himself. However, anyone good enough to see how will have played the hearts in the correct way in the first place. I'll leave advanced readers to grab a deck of cards and explore this aspect of the hand on your own! ♦♦



Valuable cards

There's more to life than aces and kings

By **EDDIE KANTAR**, LOS ANGELES

PLAN THE PLAY in 4♠ on the lead of the ♦K followed by a heart switch. East cashes the ♥AK, and then plays the ♦A.

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

Bidding commentary: East opens 1♦. Facing a passed hand, South does best to overcall 4♠. All North needs is the ♣K – even the ♣J may be enough! As a general rule, if you need a specific jack, queen or king in partner's hand to make or have a good play for your contract, bid it! Partner isn't going to know in a million years that he has the one perfect card you need.

Play commentary: As South, when forced to ruff with a powerful trump holding, keep your lower trump for entry purposes. On this deal if you ruff the second diamond with the ♠2, you can no longer get to dummy to take the club finesse even if spades break 2-2 or the ♠10 is singleton. If you ruff with the ♠9, however, and then play the ♠AK, you can cross to dummy with the ♠8 to take the club finesse. Throw the ♣2 on the ♥J, in case the clubs break badly. Then be sure to lead the ♣J so you can stay in dummy if East doesn't cover. Playing properly, you wind up with ten tricks: six spades, one heart and three clubs.

Treat your low cards that are attached to long, powerful suits with respect. They may well be the most valuable cards in your hand. ♦♦

It's your lead

Bucking the modern trend

By **RON KLINGER**, SYDNEY

TRY THESE lead problems:

1. Teams, West deals, nil vulnerable

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	dbl	2♥	3♦
pass	5♦	pass	6♦
all pass			

What would you lead as West from:

♠ A Q 5 2 ♥ Q J 10 5 4 2 ♦ J ♣ 6 5

2. Teams, East deals, NS vulnerable

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♦	3♦ ¹	pass	1♠
all pass		pass	4♠

1. Limit spade raise or stronger.

What would you lead as West from:

♠ 9 ♥ 10 5 3 2 ♦ A 10 9 7 3 ♣ A J 7

1. Top start

Awards: top heart: 100; ♣6: 60; ♦J: 30; ♠A: 20; lower spade: 0.

Principle: You need a strong reason to choose an ace lead against a trump contract (unless the suit is headed by A-K). This applies even at slam level, particularly when a strong lead is available in another suit.

This deal arose in the final of the 2013 John Arkinstall NSW Open Teams.

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



At one table it went:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	dbl	2♥	5♦
all pass			

Lead: ♥Q. 11 tricks, NS +400.

At the other table, after the auction in Problem 1, West led the ♠A. South ruffed, drew trumps, ruffed the heart losers in dummy and discarded a club on the ♠K for twelve tricks, +920 and +11 imps.

It is another example of an ace lead in a suit contract being fatal. The natural lead is the ♥Q, top of sequence, but my vote would go to the ♦J. The opponents are clearly bidding beyond their means. That means they are relying on good shape and a lot of ruffs. That in turn indicates a trump lead. Double dummy, only a club lead will defeat 6♦. In practice declarer is almost certain to fall back on the double finesse in clubs and go one down.

2. Booked out

Awards: low heart: 100; ♠9: 50; ♦A: 40; ♣A: 30; low club or low diamond: 0.

Principle: You need a strong reason to choose an ace lead against a trump contract.

A recent book, *Winning Suit Contract Leads* by David Bird and Taf Anthias, suggests that unsupported ace leads are not as bad as one thinks. Having read the book assiduously, I decided to lash out and try an ace lead against 4♠ in the semi finals of the Grand National Open Teams. It was fatal.

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

At three tables, with East-West silent, South opened 1♠, North showed a strong spade raise and South bid 4♠. Every West led a heart and every declarer failed.

The vulnerability prompted the 2♦ bid in case a sacrifice was appropriate. As partner had not supported diamonds, I was hoping partner had a singleton diamond. The plan was ♦A, ♦3 ruffed, club to the ace and another diamond ruff. Things did not go according to plan. South won the second diamond and lost only one diamond and two clubs for ten tricks and +620. No more such aces for me. ♦♦

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BIDDING FORUM

With **BRAD COLES**, CANBERRA

The following problem appeared on the Puzzle Page of our November issue. Thank you to all the readers who sent in answers.

THIS MONTH'S question is about opening sub-standard hands.

South deals, nil vul, Matchpoints

♠ K107632 ♥ – ♦ 43 ♣ A J 6 5 2

What if anything do you open?

We gave this problem to a panel of 18 experts. Take a moment to make your choice before looking at their answers.

Do you open or pass? If you open, is it constructive or with a preempt?

Two out of three panellists chose to open the bidding, with the majority doing so at the one-level.

CALL	PANEL
1♠	7
Pass	6
2♠	4
3♠	1

At the table, I would expect many players to open 2♠, but there are some disadvantages in that choice:

FRANK STEWART: Pass. Anyone who opens 2♠ deserves to play there opposite

♠ x ♥ Qxxx ♦ AKx ♣ Kxxxx.

PETER FORDHAM: 1♠. I think 2♠ is pathetic, and to open 3♠ or 4♠ leaves us stranded if partner has a strong hand with spade shortage. I have six losers in a hand with six spades, so I think 1♠ will leave us best placed.

DAVE BEAUCHAMP: 1♠. Way too good for a weak two. Don't like opening a weak 2♠ with a void, as it makes it hard for partner to assess our playing strength.

Nevertheless, the 2♠ opening received the support of two of our most-followed bidding experts:

LARRY COHEN: 2♠. Bidding clubs next. I always tell my students, once you preempt, you shouldn't bid again. Maybe I should stop telling them that.

RON KLINGER: 2♠. The days of purity and discipline have long disappeared.

TIM COPE: 2♠. Passing, letting the opponents in, and bidding later will not make this hand any easier to describe.

BOB JONES: 2♠. Should the opponents start bidding, I'll bid 4♣ next if I can. I hope nobody passes.

Bob hopes in vain, because one-third of his colleagues did in fact pass:

TIM BOURKE: Pass. I have found that passing first and bidding later on this type of hand works better than opening in first seat.

FRANK STEWART (continued): When you have length in the ranking suit, it is usually possible to come in later.

EDDIE KANTAR: Pass. Hopefully I'll be able to catch up. When I open hands like this, partner always gets me too high. I am already planning to blame partner if anything goes wrong.

PHILLIP ALDER: Pass. I expect this to be unpopular with my fellow panellists, but it will be hard to show the secondary clubs after opening 2♠.

ERIC KOKISH: Pass. Holding spades gives me time to go slowly. My prospects will be easier to assess after I know more about everyone's distribution.

MIKE LAWRENCE: Pass. My first instinct was to open 1♠ but that felt a little too much. If I did bid, 2♠ is my second and only alternative choice.

The top vote, by the tiniest of margins, went to an extremely light one-level opening:

MICHAEL WARE: 1♠. 2♠ and 3♠ are just awful – partner can never judge your lack of losers and potential number of tricks. If you want to go solo, go 4♣. Prefer pass to either of 2♠/3♠.

PAUL LAVINGS: 1♠. At Matchpoints I want to get in first and I have enough for 1♠. Passing now could make my task impossible.

ANDREW ROBSON: 1♠. If I'm honest. Might steal, might make something.

MATTHEW THOMSON: 1♠. I lean towards opening 1♠ but if I was in second seat I'd open 2♠. Please do not pass; you must choose 1♠ or 2♠.

On the actual deal, any approach would have worked, but that's often the case. The full deal is slightly different from the problem (at the table there was no ♣J, making a 1♠ opening a bit less attractive):

What is a bidding forum?

In this column, we give you a bidding sequence where it is your turn to bid. Your job is to look at your hand and make your choice. Then we give the same problem to a panel of experts and see if they agree with you.

Sounds simple? Let's find out...

♠ A J 9 8
♥ A 10 3 2
♦ 10 9 7
♣ J 4

♠ Q 5
♥ Q J 9 8 7 6 5
♦ Q
♣ K 10 3

♠ 4
♥ K 4
♦ A K J 8 6 5 2
♣ Q 9 7

♠ K 10 7 6 3 2
♥ —
♦ 4 3
♣ A 8 6 5 2

Final word: We totally failed to come to a clear consensus about the correct bid here. Passing is probably the least helpful option; you'll still have to make a decision next time, probably at a much higher level. 1♠ looks odd with only 8 HCP, but those eight points are worth a lot if partner has a fit (note that the actual deal is a 17-point game – if you take away partner's worthless jacks and ♥A, it's an 11-point game).

On hands like this, the right move really comes down to your philosophy of the game. If you like to be a difficult opponent, make a preempt – it will work out badly if you could have made 5♣, but it should work out well if the hand belongs to the opponents. If you have a conservative partnership, no one will blame you for passing.

Here's a preview of next month's hand:

Vulnerable against not, you hold:

♠ 8 5 3 2 ♥ AKQJ1075 ♦ K ♣ 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
pass	1♠	pass	?

Do you support partner's spades, or rebid your hearts? And how high do you go?

Send us your answer to this problem, along with the other problems on page four, with an explanation of why you made that choice.

We'll tell you what the experts think in the March issue. ♦♦

Summer Festival Results

Super Novice Pairs

- 1 Fiona Ferwerda - Penny Robertson 60.8
- 2 Christine Yates - Erica Gray 60.2
- 3 Jacquie Hargreaves - John Bellingham 54.6
- 4 Peter Allingham - Delia Dan 54.3
- 5 Kate Cush - Dorothy Holt 52.7
- 6 Aileen O'Brien - Cheryl Waters 51.3
- 7 John Simmonds - Sue Evershed 49.9
- 8 Ingrid Gilbert - Nola Whitecross 49.6
- 9 Judy Barfield - Joy Bryant 49.1
- 10 Ngaire Meehan - Elizabeth Cusack 49.0
- 11 Sue Manion - Trish Lentfer 48.4
- 12 Maeve Doyle - Sharon McDonald 47.7

Rising Stars Pairs

- 1 Ray Hurst - Heidi Colenbrander 60.2
- 2 Michael Brassil - Louise Brassil 57.3
- 3 Carolyn Githens - Marie Pickering 55.3
- 4 Betty Pilgrim - Susan Walter 54.7
- 5 Sandie Rooke - Annegrete Kolding 54.6
- 6 Jennifer Finigan - Mary Simon 54.5
- 7 Hugh Makin - Michael Hogan 53.8
- 8 Jeanette Mccorriston - Annabelle Boag 53.1
- 9 Marieta Borthwick - William Fitzsimons 52.5
- 10 Yvonne Peacock - Pam Ingham 49.8
- 11 Maureen Carson - Kevin Carson 49.7
- 12 Kevin Caruana - Robert Mckeon 48.8
- 12 Jacquie Collins - Jenny Muscio 48.8
- 14 David Itzkowic - Ephraim Grunhard 48.1
- 15 Kay Snowden - Jeanette Marvell 46.1
- 16 Frank Johnson - Bruce Wiggins 46.0
- 17 Chris Farr - Shelley Farr 42.9
- 18 Donna McWilliam - Peter Muller 42.7
- 19 Julie Cowling - Faye Franklin 41.6
- 20 Barbara Love - Roger Love 39.4

National Non-Life Masters Teams

- 1 Bruce Minchinton, Michael Goh, Gordon Coss, John Green
- 2 Wing Roberts, John Rogers, Mitch Dowling, Austin Driscoll
- 3 Warren Cousins, Dell Macneil, Jennie McKenzie, David McKenzie
- 4 Ellen Borda, Madeleine Gray, Jane Biscoe, Jennifer Ferguson
- 5 Hans Van Weeren, Peter Clarke, Sylvia Bellingham, Ian Hoschke

National Red Plum Life Masters Teams

- 1 Bastian Bolt, John Kelly, Bijan Assaee, Alexis Ngan
- 2 Denise Barnes, Janak Shah, Bina Kassam, Barry Dalsto
- 3 Feitong Chen, Matthew Hughes, Jacob Kalma, Jeremy Fraser-Hoskin, Brad Johnston, Nicholas Mitchell
- 4 Ian Dalziel, Trevor Berenger, Terry Heming, Lynne Moss
- 5 Keith Huggan, Ruth Gallagher, Sunny Campbell, Mal Aldons

National Novice Teams Championship

- 1 Carolyn Fitzpatrick, Rosalind Dey, Drew Fitzpatrick, Philip Dey
- 2 Lesley & Charles Bowen-Thomas, Bruce King, Alan Hemmingway
- 3 Alan Bustany, Bernard Davidson, Rowan Bergin, Judy Macklow
- 4 Gill Tidey, Margie Hullah, Carolyn Young, Monika Nilsson
- 5 Ian Rodgers, Malcolm Wood, Tony Webb, Ros Webb, Catherine Cregan, Kathryn Cole

Super Novice And Rising Star Teams

- 1 Kay Snowden, Jeanette Marvell, Carolyn Githens, Marie Pickering
- 2 Cathy Bywater, Claire Hughes, Colleen Hassall, Myra Hyland
- 3 Fiona Ferwerda, Penny Robertson, Janice Meldrum, Julie More
- 4 Elizabeth Cusack, Ngaire Meehan, Christine Yates, Erica Gray
- 5 Sue Manion, Trish Lentfer, Prue Clarke, Rita Duncan

Penline 500 Swiss Pairs Championship

- 1 Richard Bodell - Chris Fader 146.8
- 2 Cassandra Mitchell - Clare Filmer Ramsay
- 3 Gabrielle Elich - Denise Hartwig 141.1
- 4 John Rogers - Margaret Rogers 134.9
- 5 Ian Wright - Barbara Strachan 133.5
- 6 Alex Penklis - Rob Ward 132.5
- 7 Stuart Cutsforth - Renate La Marra 130.6
- 8 Larissa Cowlshaw - Robert Hurst 129.9
- 9 Sandor Varga - George Campbell 127.4
- 10 Madeleine Gray - Ellen Borda 126.2
- 11 Edward Truscott - Mike Edwards 126.2
- 12 Michael Box - Maurice Ripley 125.0
- 13 Ken Soldi - Lynne Soldi 124.9
- 14 Donna Crossan-Peacock - Lindsay Scandrett
- 15 Patricia McDonald - Bruce Chapman 124.3
- 16 Stefanie Williams - Ian Williams 123.0

Novice Swiss Pairs Championship

- 1 Don Plumb - Jan Plumb 173.8
- 2 Lisa Yoffa - James Thomas 137.8
- 3 Alan Hemmingway - Bruce King 131.8
- 4 Marjorie Phillips - Derek Poulton 130.3
- 5 Michael Chouefate - Andrew Refshaug
- 6 Catherine Ellice-Flint - Lori Smith 128.1
- 7 David Shaw - Kevin Wheelahan 122.8
- 8 Andrew Dou Grace - Gary Kembrey 119.1
- 9 Anthony Marsland - Helen Blair 117.1
- 10 Steve Briggs - Anne Apedaile 116.6
- 11 Lesley & Charles Bowen-Thomas 114.7
- 12 Leanne Nugent - Jenny Ilescu 113.1
- 13 Paul Barnett - Diana Mcauliffe 112.9
- 14 Mitch Dowling - Claire Langford 112.3
- 15 Jeanette Mccorriston - Joyce Holmes 112.1
- 16 Line Davidson - Sam York 111.7
- 17 Wing Roberts - John Rogers 109.9

Australian Novice Calendar

GOLD COAST CONGRESS

18-25 February, manager@qldbridge.com
Restricted / Novice Pairs, 18-20 February
0-500 Matchpoint Swiss Pairs, 18-19 Feb
Sunday Rookie Pairs, 19 February
0-500 Butler Swiss Pairs, 20 February
Teams Championship, 21-23 February
Under 50 Masterpoint Pairs, 21 February
Under 50 Masterpoint Pairs, 22 February
Thursday Rookie Pairs, 23 February
Friday Novice Pairs, 24 February

FORBES SWISS PAIRS, Forbes
5 March, judith.kerr2@bigpond.com

TFOB RESTRICTED PAIRS, Hobart
16-17 March, www.tasbridge.com.au

KIAMA NOVICE SWISS PAIRS, Kiama
19 March, jhetherington@vtown.com.au

STH HIGHLANDS NOVICE/RESTR PAIRS
Mittagong, 29-30 April
nrpc.17@gmail.com

BARRIER REEF RESTRICTED SWISS PAIRS
Yeppoon, 28 April - 1 May
brc@yeppoonbridgeclub.com

AUTUMN NATIONALS, Adelaide
Under Life Master Swiss Pairs 4-5 May
Under Life Master Teams 6-7 May
ANOT.organiser@gmail.com

VICTOR CHAMPION CUP, Melbourne
Restricted / Under 200 Swiss Pairs 8-9 June
vcc@abf.com.au

NSBC@LINDFIELD RESTRICTED
Sydney, 24 June (Pairs), 25 June (Teams)
mikeprescott7@hotmail.com

BRISBANE WATER NOVICE/RESTR PAIRS
Woy Woy, 8 July
barry.foster@yahoo.com.au

ANC, Canberra
15-21 July, elainne57@gmail.com

COFFS COAST GOLD CONGRESS
Coffs Harbour, 8-13 August
Prizes for Restricted and Intermediate
ian@australiawideconferences.com.au

CENTRAL COAST NOVICE/RESTR
23-24 September
ccbc_ts@outlook.com

BATHURST NOVICE TOURNAMENT
Bathurst, 28-29 October
kle-roux@bigpond.com

ILLAWARRA NOVICE/RESTR TEAMS
Wollongong, 4 November



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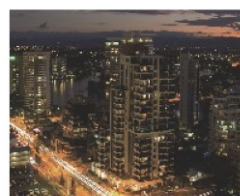
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