



Novice News – May 2023 by Stephen Bennett

It is a great time to be a Novice player at QCBC. There are so many players doing well in the local competitions, it is very exciting.

23rd April – Toowong Novice Pairs

A great warm up event for the State Champs.

3rd Kate Macdonald & Ben Leung

4th Lou Stanley & Anne Welsh – Winner Under 50 MP's

5th Louise & Stephen Bennett

6th Lois Munro & Anna De Borah – 2nd Under 50 MP's

7th Tom & Seb Langdon MacMillan

25th April – ANZAC Day Teams @ QCBC

A superb way to spend ANZAC Day, playing bridge at QCBC.

1st team in the C section Debbie Carrol, Jacinta Lee, Louise & Stephen Bennett.

7th May - QLD Novice Pairs State Championships @ Sunnybank

A wonderful event put on by QBA and Sunnybank.

State Champions Paddy Taylor & Alex Wu

3rd George Collings & Phil Kay

4th Louise & Stephen Bennett Winner most improved pair

5th Carol Findlay & Jenny Thompson

11th Richard Huysmans & John Reed Winner of the B section

13th Chris Ferguson & Eve Sirigos 2nd in the B section

Bennett's bottoms

As in life, each bottom is different. At the State Championships we managed to get 3 quite different bottoms. Here is the first one, which was just bizarre.

| BOARD 7 | | | | |
|--------------|---------|---|--------|-----------------|
| BD: 7 | ♠ KQ972 | | | Dir: S |
| | ♥ 2 | | | Vul: ALL |
| | ♦ 75 | | | |
| | ♣ QJ742 | | | |
| ♠ J83 | | | ♠ A64 | |
| ♥ KQ7 | | | ♥ AJ94 | |
| ♦ AQ43 | | | ♦ KT86 | |
| ♣ AK5 | | | ♣ T9 | |
| | ♠ T5 | | | |
| | ♥ T8653 | | | |
| | ♦ J92 | | | |
| | ♣ 863 | | | |
| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ NT |
| N | | | | 8 |
| S | | | | 19 12 |
| E | 1 | 6 | 4 | 3 5 |
| W | 1 | 6 | 4 | 3 5 |

Louise & I were sitting North, South. We were playing against a new pairing from Sunnybank. After Louise passed, west was to bid.

What would you bid?

I think it is a fairly straightforward 1D with 2NT rebid showing a balanced hand and 18/19 HCPs. But at our table west opened 1NT, interesting.

So, I have a couple of choices, I can either pass or bid 2S. Under our system 2S shows 5 spades and 4 of a minor. 8 HCPs is a bit low to bid when you are vulnerable, but I had 2 5 card suits and all my HCPs were in my long suits. So, I bid 2S. East doubled, later she explained it was for takeout. South passed, west thought the double was for penalties and left it in and I passed. As it happens, I may have been better off bidding 3C, but I thought I had a chance of making 8 tricks in spades!!!!!!

East led the 4H, leading away from an ace, interesting. Dummy came down, OMG, we have 9 HCPs between us. Perhaps there is a slam on their way, they have a diamond fit. OK, let's assume most people are in game.

So, what do I need to make to do OK on this board? You need to look at the vulnerability to answer this question. If you are favourable vulnerability (you are

green, they are red) you can afford to go 3 tricks off. If the vulnerability is the same (either both green or both red) you can go 2 tricks off and if it is unfavourable vulnerability (you are red they are green) you can only afford to go 1 trick off. So, with both sides vulnerable (red), I can go 2 off and it will still be a good board.

I think I will lose 2 tricks in spades to the A and J, 1 in hearts, 2 in diamonds and 2 in clubs hopefully. Unfortunately, you have to try and clear their spades and set up your clubs before you run out of trumps. They kept playing hearts and diamonds, running me out of trumps. I managed to make 5 tricks, which was 3 off, which gave us a bottom.

Would I bid 2S again in that situation? Probably, I liked my hand. Some people never learn!!!!

Our next bottom, was completely my fault.

| BOARD 14 | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|---|---|----------|-----------------|
| BD: 14 | ♠ Q8 | | | | Dlr: E |
| | ♥ T9872 | | | | Vul: Nil |
| | ♦ Q53 | | | | |
| | ♣ A63 | | | | |
| ♠ J3 | | | | ♠ A97542 | |
| ♥ AKQJ | | | | ♥ | |
| ♦ K76 | | | | ♦ 9842 | |
| ♣ K974 | | | | ♣ Q85 | |
| | ♠ KT6 | | | | |
| | ♥ 6543 | | | | |
| | ♦ AJT | | | | |
| | ♣ JT2 | | | | |
| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| N | | | | | 8 |
| S | | | | | 17 6 |
| E | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| W | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

We were sitting North, South again. The bidding went 2S, /, 3NT, ///. As with many NT contracts this board was a race to establish your winners. East West were trying to set up their spade suit and we had to set up our diamond winners.

I lead the 10H which west won with the AH. West went to work setting up the spades, 3S,8,9,10. Louise returned my heart suit, won by west.

And here was my mistake. I knew west had AKQJ, Louise had told me she had nothing by playing 6 then 3 in hearts. What I needed to do was tell her not to play hearts again. 9H would have worked. Instead, I played 2H which made her think I wanted her to play hearts again.

West set up the spades by playing J to A and one more spade. Had I given partner the right signal, she would have switched to diamonds and we would have kept them to 8 tricks. But my signal said I liked hearts and partner dutifully played another heart. West won that and played a club. I had to jump up to stop east getting on lead. But our goose was cooked. It did not matter what I did, west would get in eventually and play a club to QC in east, run the spades and make their contract. They ended up making 10 tricks, well done.

So, I need to make sure that my signals are clear and don't assume partner knows the same information as I do.

And I leave the best to last. It is rare to come across jaw droppingly amazing bidding, but this last hand falls into that category.

Sitting north, south were Paddy Taylor and Alex Wu.

| BOARD 24 | | | | | |
|---------------|----------|---|---|----|-----------------|
| BD: 24 | ♠ T5 | | | | Dir: W |
| | ♥ 987652 | | | | Vul: Nil |
| | ♦ AT2 | | | | |
| | ♣ 98 | | | | |
| ♠ KQ872 | | | | | ♠ J93 |
| ♥ T4 | | | | | ♥ QJ3 |
| ♦ J9 | | | | | ♦ 765 |
| ♣ AQ62 | | | | | ♣ KJ74 |
| | ♠ A64 | | | | |
| | ♥ AK | | | | |
| | ♦ KQ843 | | | | |
| | ♣ T53 | | | | |
| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| N | | 4 | 4 | | 2 |
| S | | 4 | 4 | | 2 |
| E | 2 | | | 2 | |
| W | 2 | | | 2 | |
| | | | | | 4 |
| | | | | 12 | 8 |
| | | | | | 16 |

The bidding began 1S, /, 2S. Nothing too exciting so far. Alex was sitting south, what would you bid?

I don't know what I would bid in this situation. Alex decided to double, a brilliant bid. With only 2 hearts, OK AK, I would have been reluctant to double. I pass and Paddy makes the brilliant 4H bid. At first sight it appears that Paddy has 4 losers, 1 spade, 1 heart and 2 clubs. But by winning the AS at trick 1 and playing the AK hearts, he was able to run his diamonds throwing off a club loser. East can trump in any time, but Paddy makes 1 spade, 6 hearts and 3 diamonds for 10 tricks.

Paddy & Alex were the only pair to find that makeable game contract.

I never mind getting a bottom when I get to see some jaw droppingly amazing bidding. Congratulations Paddy & Alex.

And Finally

A board I played the other day at the club reminded me of an article I read recently entitled "Sometimes being practical beats being perfect" written by Richard Todd. A link to the article is below;

<https://news.bridgebase.com/2023/04/14/practical-bridge-beat-perfect-bridge/>

| BOARD 10 | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---|---|---------|-----------------|
| BD: 10 | ♠ 8 | | | | Dir: E |
| | ♥ 92 | | | | Vul: ALL |
| | ♦ 5 | | | | |
| | ♣ AKQ875432 | | | | |
| ♠ AK963 | | | | ♠ JT74 | |
| ♥ JT4 | | | | ♥ Q8765 | |
| ♦ QJ97 | | | | ♦ 82 | |
| ♣ T | | | | ♣ J9 | |
| | ♠ Q52 | | | | |
| | ♥ AK3 | | | | |
| | ♦ AKT643 | | | | |
| | ♣ 6 | | | | |
| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| N | 6 | 2 | | | 2 |
| S | 6 | 2 | | | 5 |
| E | | | | 1 | |
| W | | | | 1 | |
| | | | | | 9 |
| | | | | | 11 |
| | | | | | 4 |
| | | | | | 16 |

Here is the board;

Louise & I were sitting North South. After a pass by East, Louise opened 1D. With a 4 loser hand, 9 winners, my slam radar is going off. West overcalls 1S and I bid?

I did think about bidding 6C straight away, but decided to take it slower and bid 2C. Under our system this is game forcing. East bid 2S and partner made the brilliant 3D bid. This shows 6+ diamonds and 16+ HCPs. After west passes I have heard enough, I can only lose 1 trick in their suit and partner has 16+ HCPs. Partner just needs 3 tricks for me, so I bid 6C. After east leads a spade which they win, I take the next 12 tricks. Of the 17 tables that played this board only 4 bid it to slam, most stopped in 5C. As Robert Todd says “The bottom line is, we all love gadgets (conventions) and the science of bridge, but winning bridge is often keeping it simple and doing something practical!”.

Coming Events

The **Australia Wide Novice Pairs** is a chance to pit yourself against over 1,000 pairs from across the country. You also get a booklet that goes through how you should have bid and played the hands.

QCBC is running 2 sessions where you can play in this event. You just play in 1 of the sessions.

Monday 29th 7pm Monday

Tuesday 30th 10am Tuesday

Australia Wide Teams Knockout. This event is on Realbridge, an online platform. It takes place at 7.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of the month for 6 months from June onwards.

There is a Novice section and an under 50MPs section. It would be great to have a team in each section.