



GEELONG BRIDGE CLUB NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1

March 2026

From the President

Growth, Success and Playing the Game the Right Way

It is a genuine pleasure to reflect on the continued success of our Geelong Bridge Club. Over recent months we have seen encouraging growth in our numbers, strong attendance across sessions, and a wonderful mix of experienced players and enthusiastic newcomers coming through our doors. That growth does not happen by accident. It reflects the welcoming culture of our club, the dedication of our committee and directors, and the willingness of members to mentor, encourage and include others at the table.

In particular, it was simply wonderful to see **16 tables in the recent Mixed Pairs event**. To walk into the room and hear that unmistakable hum of conversation, bidding boxes in motion, cards being checked and results discussed – it was a terrific sight. The noise, the energy and the sense of shared enjoyment reminded us all what a thriving club feels like. Those moments are something we should be proud of.

A healthy club, however, is not just measured by numbers or noise. It is measured by the quality of the experience we provide – the enjoyment, fairness and integrity of the game we all love.

With growth comes responsibility. Many of our newer members are still becoming familiar with the laws and the finer ethical expectations of bridge. Even seasoned players benefit from an occasional reminder. One area that deserves attention is the issue of hesitations and breaks in tempo.

Bridge is a game of authorised information. We are entitled to use what is said and what is legally conveyed through the auction and the play. We are not entitled to use information gained from a partner's hesitation, tone, mannerisms or speed – or lack thereof. A noticeable break in tempo can unintentionally suggest uncertainty, extra values, or a difficult decision. When partner then acts, they must be very careful not to choose an action that could reasonably have been suggested by that hesitation.

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Growth, Success and Playing the Game the Right Way *continued from previous page*

To be clear, this is not about accusing anyone of deliberate wrongdoing. Hesitations happen. Bridge is a thinking game, and sometimes a hand requires thought. What matters is how we handle those situations. The laws are explicit: unauthorised information from partner must not influence our decisions. Acting on such information – even subconsciously – is unethical and not permitted.

As a club, we must all be cognisant of this. If you hesitate, do so thoughtfully and only when necessary. If partner hesitates, pause yourself before acting and ensure your decision is one you would have made without that break in tempo. Directors are there to assist – not to reprimand – and calling the Director when unsure protects everyone at the table.

Maintaining ethical standards is not a burden; it is what makes duplicate bridge such a compelling and fair contest. Our reputation as a club depends not only on our hospitality and growth, but on our commitment to playing the game as it was designed to be played – with integrity, respect and fairness.

I am proud of the culture we are building at Geelong Bridge Club. Let's continue to grow, to welcome new players, to fill the room with that wonderful sound of a busy session – and to uphold the highest standards of our game.

See you at the table.

Justin Stark



Brown Sticker Conventions

The Match Committee met recently and agreed to a minor amendment of the current playing regulation on 'Brown sticker' conventions (see 2026 Program book, page 6, clause 1). A 'brown sticker' convention refers to a bid that is weak and does not promise four cards in a defined suit e.g.

- a 1D overcall of a natural (possibly short) 1C opening that shows hearts OR spades and clubs;
- a weak 2NT opening that shows 5/5 in the minors OR 5/5 in the majors.

Notable exceptions are the Multi 2D opening, a natural 1NT overcall and cue bids on strong hands to force partner - these are not 'Brown sticker' conventions.

Amended regulation: The use of 'Brown sticker' conventions will now be permitted at Monday, Wednesday and Friday sessions and at Championship events held on other days.

Any partnership using one or more 'Brown sticker' conventions must individually list them on their system cards and/or supplementary sheets.

Mike Stokie Chair, GBC Match Committee

Club Results



Individual Championship Mondays 8 & 15 December

| | |
|-----|----------|
| 1st | P Jain |
| 2nd | S Duff |
| 3rd | R Lawrie |

Mixed Pairs Thursdays 29 January & 5 February

| | |
|-----|----------------------|
| 1st | G Bailey, K Bailey |
| 2nd | J Stark, A Gunst |
| 3rd | A Feiner, T Johnston |

Western Region Pairs Saturday 14 February

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 1st | G Bailey, K Bailey |
| 2nd | P Jain, G Chettle |
| 3rd | D Newland, J Stark |

Western Region Teams Sunday 15 February

| | |
|-----|---|
| 1st | D Newlands, A Robbins, S Lester, D Newland, J Stark |
| 2nd | R Gillard, M Stokie, P Jain, G Chettle |
| 3rd | A Gunst, A Feiner, J Johnstone, D Peacock |

Rank Promotions

Congratulations to the following members who have received new Masterpoint rankings.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Graduate | Cat Traynor Bobby Simic Megan Schwab |
| Club | Jane Opie Brian Baldwinson |
| Bronze Local | Patt Cristina |
| Silver Local | David Melzer |
| Regional | Gary Barfoot Mary Ilic |
| State | Glenn Foard |

HIGH SCORES

| | | |
|-----|------------------------------|--------|
| Dec | C Dodgshun, L Frankenburg | 67.8% |
| Jan | D Renshaw, P Cristina | 72.56% |
| Feb | D Read, R Kahn | 69.79% |

Joan Wilson Trophy Winners

| | |
|-----|------------|
| Dec | L Lee |
| Jan | J Skeen |
| Feb | C Dodgshun |

NEW MEMBERS

The Geelong Bridge Club welcomes the following new and re-joining members:

Gail Humphrey

Rita Kahn

Binny Thomas

Gary Van Someran

PIZZA SUNDAYS

The next Pizza Sundays are the 29 March, 26 April and 24 May, starting at 4.00pm, but be seated 15 minutes before that, please. Come along and join in the fun, but be sure to put your name on the list if you wish to attend.

Andy Hung Workshop How to Bid and Play Like an Expert



On Wednesday 28 January Andy Hung travelled to Geelong to lead a workshop on how to bid and play like an expert bridge player. Andy has successfully represented Australia internationally on numerous occasions and has won a few Australian national tournaments, most notably the 2014 Australian National Open Teams. When he is not competing, Andy teaches and leads bridge holidays.

Andy started the session by giving a short rundown of his bridge accomplishments, which are pretty impressive, and then talked to us about bidding, declarer play and defence. For each of these he worked through examples and then it was our turn to play some hands with Andy answering questions and advising on the best course of action (and the worst)!

I found the workshop to be really helpful. Andy is an articulate and patient teacher and I managed to remember some of his tips.

- Don't be too restrictive with your preempts—it's ok to have a void.
- Familiarise yourself with the common percentages of suit breaks and use them to inform your declarer play.
- When defending, it is OK to lead from a suit headed by the King, despite what many bridge texts tell us.

It was exhilarating to listen to someone who is competitive at the international level, but I'm afraid it will take more than one workshop to make me an expert bridge player. Hopefully we can invite Andy to return to the Geelong Bridge Club for another workshop.

Andy has a website, <https://andyhungbridge.com/> if you would like to find out more about him or perhaps participate in one of his popular bridge holidays, here in Australia or travelling overseas.

Jennifer Blyton



A Hand from Andy Hung's Newsletter

Andy Hung was kind enough to give me permission to use one of his hands from his team's win in the 2025 US Nationals Soloway Knockout Teams competition. Taken from his newsletter and adjusted to fit this newsletter's format. Assume IMPs (teams) scoring (i.e overtricks are not important). Editor

Problem

West

♠ 952
♥ Q94
♦ KJ72
♣ A74

East

♠ AT
♥ A86
♦ AT983
♣ K86

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| | | 1NT | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

You are declaring in 3NT on the 4S lead.

North plays KS and you duck, he continues with JS to your AS as South follows with the 3S. Needing the diamond suit to come in, how would you play the diamond suit?

Solution

We know that spades are splitting 5-3 as South led the fourth best 4S and followed with the 3S. This isn't sufficient to make any changes in terms of how we play the diamond suit so, here, we should follow the "Eight Ever, Nine Never" rule when missing the Queen, so play the AKD and go for the drop!

Full deal

Board 2

Dlr: East

Vul: Nil

| | |
|---------|---------|
| ♠ KJ8 | ♠ AT |
| ♥ 732 | ♥ A86 |
| ♦ 65 | ♦ AT983 |
| ♣ QJT92 | ♣ K86 |
| ♠ 952 | ♠ AT |
| ♥ Q94 | ♥ A86 |
| ♦ KJ72 | ♦ AT983 |
| ♣ A74 | ♣ K86 |
| ♠ Q7643 | |
| ♥ KJT5 | |
| ♦ Q4 | |
| ♣ 53 | |

Our opponent declarer played a diamond to the king and decided to finesse on the second round, losing to my partner's QD which took the contract down.

Our team mates at the other table played off the AKD and were duly rewarded.

Interestingly, the declarers at both tables chose to lead the TD first (intending to always play dummy's KD). This play has no cost as we have all of the intermediate cards, but it has the extra opportunity that it might induce South to cover, with the QxD. If South plays low, then you can still play the KD and AD to go for the drop anyway.

<https://andyhungbridge.com/Andy's Latest Bridge Newsletter January 2026,pp4,7>

Western Region Pairs and Teams

Recently the Western Region Bridge Association held a Pairs and Teams event at Geelong Bridge Club over the weekend of 14 and 15 February.

On the Saturday we had 34 pairs playing and on the Sunday 15 teams. The results were :

Pairs

Kirsten and Gavin Bailey (Seniors pair)

Jean McGonigal and Dot Read (Womens pair)



Teams

1st Denny Newlands, Arthur Robbins, Justin Stark, Douglas Newland and Stephen Lester.

2nd Mike Stokie, Roger Gillard, Geoff Chettle and Piyush Jain.

It was a great weekend and everyone appeared to enjoy the bridge and playing against clubs within the Western Region - Ballarat, Warrnambool, Torquay, Ocean Grove and Geelong.

This is the last event that the existing Committee will run as Dot Peacock, Kathryn Graham and myself are resigning at the AGM in March. Dot and I have worked together for six years and Kathryn two years. My sincere thanks to Dot and Kathryn for all their hard work over this time. I have enjoyed working with you both - we have had many laughs along the way !!

I also want to thank all the clubs for their support and help and in particular the clubs who have held events for the Western Region.

Bridget Fitzpatrick is taking over as President and Jane Skeen as Secretary/Treasurer - I wish them both all the very best for their new challenge within the bridge world and hope you will all support them, as you have me, over the past years.

Jenny Johnstone



Directors Workshop

The Australian Bridge Directors Association (ABDA) exists to establish minimum standards, and to work for the maintenance and improvement of these standards, for tournament directing at all levels of competitive bridge in Australia.

To further this aim, the ABDA ran a two day workshop over the weekend of 21 and 22 February. Three directors from GBC, Linda Lee, Val Sercombe and I attended, along with about 50 other directors from all around Australia. Sessions were run by Laura Ginnan, Laurie Kelso, Jon Free, John McIlraith, Sebastian Yuen and others, providing attendees with a wealth of knowledge and experience from which to learn.

Topics ranged from managing bridgemates (including how to edit the setup in various circumstances and what can be done if there is a power failure), how to make a good ruling, common misconceptions, adjusting scores and finally to everybody's favourites, hesitation and unauthorised information.

One of the misconceptions that I had prior to the Workshop, was that if my partner hesitates, then I had to pass at my turn to bid if the hesitation is agreed by everyone at the table. But no, hesitation is not an infraction in and of itself. As our GBC President pointed out in his excellent report, stopping to think is part of the game. However it does constrain me, in that my bid can not be influenced by any perceived unauthorised information (Law 16) that I might gain from my partner's action. At the end of the hand, if the non-offending side believes they have suffered damage because of my (perhaps) tainted bid, they should call the Director to make a ruling.

It is not just being 'out of tempo'. How many times have you seen a player quickly slap down a pass card and glare at their partner. The whole table knows they have nothing in their hand and want their partner to stop digging that hole. They are giving their partner extraneous information from their mannerism (Law 16B).

The most important message is that the Director is not there to punish a player. The Director is there to restore equity and fairness at the table.

Don't you love bridge?

Jennifer Blyton



Beginner Lessons Update

By the time you are reading this article, our first class of 2026 will have started their exciting journey into the wonderful world of bridge. Lessons will be held on Tuesday afternoons, commencing at 1.15pm.

I had a large contact list of people who had expressed interest in lessons. Most had come from word-of-mouth recommendations, with a few responding to the sign at the front of the Clubhouse. Thanks to all who spread the word to family and friends regarding these lessons.

I emailed all on my list in January and had 20 confirmed enrolments within a few days. Terry Passlow and I are looking forward to nurturing their interest. I will keep the committee updated on their progress and look forward to welcoming them to the Geelong Bridge Club.

Bernadette O'Dea

A Hand from Pizza Night

After a good bidding sequence, EW finished in 6H, played by West. (Better if East becomes Declarer!!) On a favourable C lead won by South, and a H return, won by 10H in East, assess how to make your slam.

Board 4 W All

| West | East |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ♠43 ♥AQJ9873 ♦72 ♣J4 | ♠AK752 ♥KT5 ♦AQ85 ♣Q |

Novices will say easy, ruff the losing Club and take the Diamond finesse. Experts will ask, is there another way to avoid the Diamond finesse? Yes, there is a risk of the opponents ruffing a Spade, but the correct play is to try and set up a long Spade for a Diamond discard. So, A,K of Spades, ruff a Spade, ruff a Club, ruff another Spade (they were 4-2), setting up the 5th Spade for a Diamond discard. Draw the trumps, then discard the losing Diamond on the Spade.

Setting up a side suit is a standard technique, as a way to reduce losers, and often it needs to be done before/ or during the drawing of trumps.

It starts after the opening lead, when you should assess your losers, and make a plan as to how to reduce them, and decide when/how to draw trumps. This is fundamental to becoming a good bridge player.

Arthur Robbins

Seven Rules for Discarding

These are rules which you should keep in mind while discarding. Sometimes more than one rule will be applicable.

1. Protect your honour holdings and do not discard from Kx, Qxx, Jxxx while the higher honours have not yet been played.
2. If dummy has a side suit of 4 cards (you can see it on table) and you have 4 cards in the suit, do not discard them so that declarer cannot set the suit up easily.
3. If declarer has a side suit of 4 cards (declarer has mentioned the suit in the auction) and you have 4 cards in the suit, do not discard them so that declarer cannot set the suit up easily.
4. If declarer is discarding a side suit, it might be a good idea to discard it too but be wary of rules 1 and 2.
5. If you wish to show strength (not length) in a side suit, discard the highest spot card that you can afford in that suit. (you may play odd-even instead).
6. If partner has a suit which is set up, try to keep a card in that suit to get to partner's hand later.
7. If dummy has a short suit and declarer is not trying to take ruffs in that suit (particularly if dummy is the shorter trump holding), declarer possibly has no losers in that suit so it may be safe to discard.

Douglas Newlands

Coming Up

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Monday 2 March | Open Teams A Qualifying 2/2 |
| Friday 6 March | Open Teams B Qualifying 2/2 |
| Wednesday 11 March | Open Teams Semi Final (1.00pm start) |
| Wednesday 25 March | Open Teams Final (1.00pm start) |
| Sunday 29 March | Pizza Sunday |
| Thursday 2 April | Buddy Day Duplicate |
| Sunday 12 April | Western Region Friendly Teams (Ocean Grove) |
| Fridays 17&24 April | Helen Drinnan Teams (GNOT qualifying event) |
| Sunday 26 April | Pizza Sunday |
| Friday 8 May | Helen Drinnan Teams Final |
| Sunday 17 May | Geelong Region GNOT Teams Final (Gold Points) |
| Sunday 24 May | Pizza Sunday |
| Sunday 31 May | Western Victoria GNOT Pairs (Gold Points) |

Our First Rodeo

We here at GBC have become accustomed to our senior players doing well at the State and National level, but rarely do we get to celebrate a pair of players in the <100 MPs who scoop the pool in the Pairs, Teams and Overall <100 MPs categories at the National level, in their first outing. It's a long article, but hopefully it will encourage other players from GBC to test the waters at State and National congresses. Congratulations Glenn Foard and David Melzer. Editor

We are novices with not many masterpoints to rub together between us. But, with the help of expert players at the club, hopefully we are improving. Having played okay in some regional events we thought it was time to head interstate and play in the Canberra Summer Festival of Bridge - our first big rodeo.

The festival is a long-term feature on the Australian bridge calendar with a wide range of events held over two weeks in January. Players from around the country take part. We opted to register for a three-day event - the *National Novice Allrounder*. It comprises three separate competitions: Duplicate Pairs on day one, Swiss Pairs (Imps) on day two and Teams (Imps) on day three. The best pair over the three events is awarded *Best Allrounder*.

Were we up to it? We were uncertain - and our nervousness increased when Arthur - our generous mentor - announced to those playing at the club the preceding Friday "David and Glenn are going to Canberra." He encouraged anyone interested to follow our progress online. Thanks Arthur - no pressure.

We decided to drive to Canberra, so early the day before the event we headed off on a ten-hour road trip. Fortunately, the Hume Highway, which had been closed due to the bushfires, had re-opened, although we had to drive through some thick smoke. Road trips can be wearisome, but time passed quickly enough as we talked ... bridge! It was a great opportunity to review our systems and new conventions.

"Don't forget to use a long-suit trial bid" - thanks for your lesson, Mike. "Make sure we use Stayman correctly" - thanks for your lesson, Denny. "Yes, we will use Smolen to show 5/4 in the majors with 10+ after 1N 2C 2D." "And Doug said we have to play Lebensohl." Thanks for your lesson, Doug. "But not XYZ just yet." Sorry Doug. And, of course, we had all of Arthur's advice to review and try and remember. For example, "We should always try and play in 3NT rather than 5 of a minor." "Bid our light games when playing Imps." "Pass is the most underutilised bid in bridge." But "put some pressure on opponents during the auction." Thanks Arthur - we are still working to resolve the apparent contradiction. Apparently, it involves exercising judgment.

We tested each other on our system and bidding all the way to Gundagai. Six hours of systems talk! Luckily, we still had time to listen to a Larry Cohen webinar on Lebensohl and Stayman cue bids. "1N (2D) 2N* (P) 3C* (P) 3D* showing a diamond stopper and asking for a 4-card major - remember slow shows, fast denials."

But would we remember?

Continued next page

Our First Rodeo *continued from previous page*

Wednesday - Duplicate Pairs

We walked into a large, crowded room on day one with our newly printed system card that we had reviewed with Arthur Robbins. With two events and more than 50 tables in the main room, this was a lot of bridge players in one place! We checked the draw and found table 23 and play for the 52 pairs in our competition commenced at 10.00 am. To our surprise, our first opponents asked to look at our system card so we thought we had better look at theirs! It was good to finally play some boards and we seemed to be doing okay through the morning session. We found and made 6H on one board, which gave us confidence. The morning session concluded and we headed off to get lunch. Naturally, we checked results on our phone. "Wow, 70% and we are leading" - a very pleasant surprise!

The afternoon session didn't go as well, however. Some missteps preceded a failed attempt by Glenn to make a tough game. "The D9 was good!" Arthur's advice to always watch the pips had not been followed, to our cost. And to make things worse (for everyone) the air-conditioning had broken down. The temperature in the room was 35 degrees. We were feeling the heat for two reasons.

At the end of the afternoon session our mood had changed. "We've blown it." We sought out a consoling drink at the bar and then checked the results. "Melzer - Foard: First!" We had done just enough with 56% in the afternoon session to maintain our lead. Suddenly the beers tasted much better.

Thursday - Swiss Pairs

The bad news was the air conditioning was still not working. Another uncomfortable day followed. The good news, however, was that Alexandra Mills (16 years of age) and Jeremy Lin (17), two guns from the Australian Youth Group, accepted our invitation to join us in the Friday Teams event. We had got the better of them playing duplicate, and they didn't feature highly in Wednesday's results, but we knew they were good. Note the names! We reckon they will play for Australia one day.

We also knew we would be playing against other good players in the Swiss Pairs event. Following the Duplicate win, we were placed on Table One. We managed a reasonable win in the first match (by 22 Imps) but didn't maintain our position. A second win was followed by a loss. We slid down to Table Seven. At our first rodeo we were always going to be thrown off, at least once. But we got back on the horse and regathered ourselves for another win in the last match before the lunch break. With three matches to go we were equal fifth ... but tiring. Thankfully, the ice-water the organisers supplied to try and negate the failed air-conditioning, along with a caffeine hit, was keeping us going.

With a bit of luck and some good defence we managed a healthy win in match 5 (by 23 Imps) - back to Table One. Our luck held in a very tight sixth match when, on one board, David made an inspired opening bid and Glenn made an aggressive 3NT contract and, on another, our Canberran opponents (Josh and Max) bid bravely to 6C however, against the odds, we held ♣Q10xx over declarer's ♣AKJxxxx. Lucky. It was after 5 pm but we still had one match to go to determine the outcome. And who should arrive at Table One? Our new best friends, Alex and Jeremy.

Continued next page

Our First Rodeo *continued from previous page*

We slugged it out in another very tight, but good-spirited match and just managed a win - much to their chagrin. The old farts had beaten them again! (N.B. We are younger than many, but from their perspective we are almost fossils.)

Despite our tiring minds, we got over the line and managed to win the Swiss Pairs. We celebrated over an excellent dinner with Margaret Glover and her sister, Janice, who had a great result in their event. We'll let them tell their story. (Of course, over dinner Glenn had to confess to Margaret he had an overdue library book. He remembered - always play the card you are known to hold.)

Friday - Teams

After our good fortune on day one and two, we received some very kind messages from fellow GBC members who had, indeed, followed our progress. We were touched that people were interested in a couple of novices. Thank you all.

And, so, to the Teams event playing with Alex and Jeremy. We had thought they were very good and so it proved to be. On only three hours sleep (apparently young, gun bridge players don't need much) they played superbly and pulled us out of a few holes we had dug. Glenn, in particular, wasn't playing well but we had chosen our partners wisely. Our strange team of young and not quite so young won each of our six matches and had a comfortable win in the event. Thanks Alex and Jeremy.

After three long days, we were awarded the *National Novice Allrounder* prize. Alex and Jeremy were the runners up. We were chuffed. A clean sweep exceeded our wildest expectations. We had worked hard on our game but knew our success stemmed from some good fortune, the excellent teachers we have at GBC and an enormously helpful mentor - thanks heaps Arthur!



David Melzer and Glenn Foard



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Our First Rodeo *continued from previous page*

Postscript - for novices only

For those who would like some bridge rather than a bridge story, here is one hand we recall from the 150 or so we played. It was Board 3, in Match 4 of the Teams event.

Board 3

Dlr:S

Vul:EW

| | |
|---------|---------|
| ♠ A984 | |
| ♥ A984 | |
| ♦ KT | |
| ♣ T96 | |
| ♠ 7 | ♠ J32 |
| ♥ KQJ63 | ♥ 2 |
| ♦ J763 | ♦ AQ982 |
| ♣ AQ2 | ♣ KJ75 |
| ♠ KQT65 | |
| ♥ T75 | |
| ♦ 54 | |
| ♣ 843 | |

How would you bid? It's Teams (Imps), noting the unfavourable vulnerability. South is the dealer.

David was sitting East and Glenn West. After South passes, Glenn makes the obvious 1H bid. Should North X to show 4 spades? Tempting, but a bit light and not the right shape. North passes. David bids 2D with his 10+ and five diamonds. South passes again. What's Glenn's bid? Perhaps it is 3S asking for a stopper to play 3N? Maybe it's wrong, but Glenn opts for 3C - forward going and showing a club stopper - thinking he can return to diamonds if necessary. David responds 4C (denying a spade stopper) and likely showing a 5/4 hand. With 13 HCPs (opposite 10+), a diamond fit and a singleton spade, Glenn decides 5D is worth a go. Arthur did say not to worry too much about vulnerability playing Imps. So, it goes (P) 1H (P) 2D (P) 3C (P) 4C (P) 5D AP. David duly takes the diamond finesse and makes the required 11 tricks to score 600. Meanwhile, at the other table our opponents decided 3NT was the best contract. Our teammates, Alex and Jeremy, held them to 7 tricks, scoring 200 for a net 800 and 13 Imps. A nice board!

Glenn Foard and David Melzer

A note from the editor

As the editor, I would like to encourage you all to pass on anything you think will be of interest to the members regarding the Bridge Club. Thanks again to those who contributed information and interesting articles for this edition. Contact the committee, or me at jlbyton@gmail.com .

Jennifer Blyton

Careful with that Axe Eugene!

(with apologies to Pink Floyd)

The hand shown today shows some easily made and common errors. The 2NT overcall showed both minors but, after North showed some values, South simply took over asking for key cards in hearts and then placing the final contract in 6S. West led the QD which declarer won and drew trumps in five rounds. I guess you would too but there is an important question to be answered! What cards did you discard on the third, fourth and fifth trumps?

It looks as though there are plenty of irrelevant minor suit cards but, surprisingly, that's not the case. Have another quick think while we look ahead.

When a heart is played towards table, East will duck but they will win the second heart and exit with a minor. Declarer will never get the diamond discard on the third heart so what should he do? It is necessary to strip East of exit cards so that he only holds hearts after winning the second heart.

Teams

Dlr: South

Vul: NS

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| ♠ 65 | ♠ 98732 |
| ♥ KQJ102 | ♥ A984 |
| ♦ 752 | ♦ 3 |
| ♣ 542 | ♣ 873 |
| ♠ - | ♠ AKQJ104 |
| ♥ 75 | ♥ 63 |
| ♦ QJ10984 | ♦ AK6 |
| ♣ QJ1096 | ♣ AK |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|-------|
| | | | 2C |
| 2NT | 3H | P | 4NT |
| P | 5C | P | 6S |
| All Pass | | | |

To achieve this declarer needs to play two diamonds and three clubs before the second heart. After drawing trumps, declarer needs to play two top diamonds and two top clubs before playing the first heart. As East will duck the first heart, declarer can now ruff the third club before playing the second heart and leaving East with a heart at trick thirteen. Only now do we realise that on the third, fourth and fifth trumps, declarer must not throw a small club! It may be small but it matters crucially. The three discards can be one diamond and two hearts so that the third club is retained.

An easy slip if you draw trumps before thinking things to the end.

The second error, alluded to earlier, was West bidding over the 2C opening. There is often little point in bidding unless you have a chance of winning the auction. All you do is force declarer onto the right line in the play. In the given situation, 4NT bid might work but 2NT was rendered useless by the 3H bid!

Douglas Newlands

Bid, Play, Defend

These are the three main features of our “game” or as one of our national representative said “it is not a game but war”. In our game , bidding is some 20%, declarer play some 40% and defence equally important at perhaps 40% also.

Bidding may be as simple or complex as a partnership may agree to play; but one must understand the ramifications and sequences ongoing, as well as the risks and limitations. Simple bidding is the best and only having mastered the play and defence, should players with a good understanding of the scoring start using intricate methods.

Declarer play may be both simple and complex (some of which I am still coming to terms with and some things like crisscross squeezes are a distant issue in another realm). One needs good concentration and a keen understanding of who is doing what at the table. Understanding the opponents’ carding and style is essential to help one to declare successfully.

Defence is probably the most neglected part of the game, particularly for those learning the game. An understanding of who is doing what at the table and how to maximise the cards you hold with your partner.....indeed it is vital to understand how you may help partner to assist in getting the best tricks available to the defence. This includes leading and getting the right information to partner (without using dubious tactics).

Getting the lead reasonably correct may very well make or break a contract. There are numerous books on leads and these understandings need to be known to both players in a partnership - if you are looking for sound results. For example, I note that some use the 4th best to lead against No Trump contracts.....the other day some defender led the 8 from a holding of KQ1082.....unholy error. The K is the obvious lead ! It is presumed that you have a contiguous sequence and one should lead top of sequences (unless you have a special subtle agreement).

Carding as part of your defence is important and giving correct information to your partner is critical. Indeed the other day I lazily played a 3 instead of a 2. Partner correctly read the card as giving count and it cost us a bottom; if I had played the 2, we would have gained an equal top.

Suitably reprimanded!

Gavin Bailey

Twelve Rules on Choice of Suit for Opening Leads

1. If partner has bid a suit, that should be a high priority choice BUT be wary of club leads if you play a short 1C and that is what partner has bid.
2. If you have your own strong suit, that is another high priority choice.
3. Do not lead suits that either opponent has bid. Good declarers will try to set up side suits (which they will often have bid) so do not help them by playing the suit. If you do lead dummy's side suit at a suit contract, it must be a singleton so that there is some chance you are helping your side rather than declarer!
4. If they have opened a short 1C or better minor, look at the auction carefully to determine whether opener has club length or not. If they have club length, lead elsewhere. For example: 1C-1H-1N : opener does not have 4 hearts (no raise); opener does not have 4 spades (didn't bid 1S) so they are 3334 or 2335 or 3235 or xxx6. They may have 3343 but many people will open this 1D. So opener most likely has real clubs on this auction.
5. If it is unclear what suit to lead but the auction is a stretch (1N-2N-3N or 1H-2H-3H-4H), try to make a safe, passive lead and leave declarer to do all the work themselves. Try to not lead from an unsupported honour.
6. If it is unclear what suit to lead but the auction is not a stretch (1N-3N or 1H-2NT-3D-4H), try to find an aggressive lead to set up defensive tricks quickly before declarer can set up their suit and take discards. i.e. lead from an unsupported honour.
7. If declarer is likely to take ruffs in the short hand (or even embark on a complete cross-ruff), try to lead trumps at every chance. Auctions like 2NT(minors)-3C-P suggests responder has clubs and will ruff diamonds and that the majors will be ruffed in the 2NT hand. Lead A and another from Ax but lead x from Axx so that when partner gets in and returns their second trump, you can win the second round and play the third round which is usually the most damaging one.
8. If you have 4 trumps (or 1 or 0 trumps, so partner is likely to have 4), try a forcing defence. This means lead a side suit repeatedly forcing declarer to ruff in the long hand so that, eventually, one defender has longer trumps than declarer. This is a very strong form of defence.
9. If declarer has shown a strong 2 suiter, try a forcing defence as above.
10. Against grand slams always lead passively and safely and this is often a trump since they will have used RKC to ensure there are no trump honours or aces missing.
11. Against small slams in a suit, find a lead which might set up a second trick for the defence.
12. Against 6NT try to find a safe lead. KQ is excellent but you will rarely have it. At matchpoints, you might lead an ace if there is any chance declarer can discard all their cards in that suit.

Douglas Newlands

A Good Use of a Splinter Bid

During Week 1 of the Mixed Pairs, a hand arose where a Splinter bid could have led to a slam.

Board 8
Dlr: W
Vul: Nil

| | |
|---------|---------|
| West | East |
| ♠ 9 | ♠ T643 |
| ♥ AK8 | ♥ 53 |
| ♦ A953 | ♦ KJT74 |
| ♣ AQJ75 | ♣ K4 |

The bidding started 1C by West, 1D by East, then 2S by South. At our table, my partner, West, decided 5D was warranted, and yes she was correct. However, a strong player, knowing they were going to the 5 level, would bid 4S (Splinter), then East, sensing a slam, might bid 5C (A/K of C), and West might bid 6D. While I am not saying that the bids might go that way, but 6D can never be reached without the splinter (remember, the splinter here, says enough to play at the 5 level!!) and the 5C cue bid could happen!

Learning to use splinters is an important step on the way to being a good player. Many are scared of splinters, but they are very powerful. (a splinter in a suit where you don't hold an honour reduces it to a 30 HCP pack!)

Arthur Robbins

Law 23—Comparable Call

You've probably come across a situation where, for one reason or another, (often after an insufficient bid) a player is told by the Director that one of their options is to replace that call with a comparable call if they can. So what is a comparable call?

Law 23A tells us that

A call that replaces a withdrawn call is a comparable call, if it:

1. has the same or similar meaning as that attributable to the withdrawn call, or
2. defines a subset of the possible meanings attributable to the withdrawn call, or
3. has the same purpose (eg an asking bid or a relay) as that attributable to the withdrawn call.

Clear?

Jennifer Blyton

Two Chances Are Better Than One

Even with a fairly simple plan in view, it is important to keep good technique in mind. In this hand, the auction was straightforward and West led the obvious queen of diamonds. Declarer seems to have nine easy tricks via five trumps and the top two cards in both minors. There are two possible chances for a tenth trick. One is the trump finesse. Do you see the other?

The second chance is to ruff the third heart which means not drawing trumps while the defenders will try to play two rounds of trumps to deny the heart ruff. What is your plan?

After winning the ace of diamonds (and you should get into the habit of playing top of equals as declarer), it is necessary to play hearts but if hearts are led from hand, East will win each time and lead a trump through you. This will stop the ruff and still let the defenders win a trump trick to put the contract down. With this in mind, declarer crossed to the king of clubs and led a low heart from table. East rose with the ace and returned a trump which declarer wins with the ace.

Pairs
Dir: South
Vul: Both

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| ♠ 83 | |
| ♥ 32 | |
| ♦ 87653 | |
| ♣ AK74 | |
| ♠ Q75 | ♠ 62 |
| ♥ K875 | ♥ AJ109 |
| ♦ QJ102 | ♦ 94 |
| ♣ Q10 | ♣ J9532 |
| ♠ AKJ1094 | |
| ♥ Q64 | |
| ♦ AK | |
| ♣ 86 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| | | | 1S |
| P | 1NT | P | 3S |
| P | 4S | All Pass | |

Now cross again to dummy with ace of clubs and lead a second heart. If East had both of the ace and king of hearts, this would be the winning play but West took the queen with the king. West cannot continue trumps as that would lose their defensive trump trick and so, being out of clubs, West returned another diamond. As East was not able to ruff the diamond, declarer was able to win with the king.

Now is the time to ruff the last heart with dummy’s eight of trumps. After the ruff, declarer can return to hand by ruffing a diamond with the jack of spades and then cash the king. After conceding a trump to the queen, declarer has ten tricks.

Notice that declarer’s approach would have succeeded any time there was no defensive ruff and trumps were 3-2. Had trumps been 4-1 with West, West could have continued with a second trump without cost and declarer would always be down.

Douglas Newlands

Geelong Bridge Club

Social Bridge

Term 1: 9, 16, 23 February & 2, 16, 23, 30 March
None on Labour Day 9 March

- When:** 10:00AM – 12:00PM
Where: 148-152 Portarlington Rd, Newcomb – plenty of parking
Cost: \$5 per session
Format: Relaxed & informal bridge sessions – All welcome



Geelong Bridge Club

Sunday Bridge 2026

15 March, 19 April & 3 May

- When:** 1:00PM – 4:15 PM
Where: 148-152 Portarlington Rd, Newcomb – plenty of parking
Cost: \$8 per session

