



## Editorial

How can we improve our bridge skills? Most teachers would agree that the best way is to play as much as possible against stronger players, gain experience and learn from your mistakes.

Congresses are good for this, and also give one an opportunity to gain masterpoints, if this is your thing. Central Coast Bridge Club are holding their annual congress over the weekend of 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> March, and we would encourage our club members to participate in this.

Another way to improve is to watch experts, and there is a feast of opportunities to do this on the internet. The website '[Bridge TV Australia](#)' has a large number of videos, from short clips to those lasting for many hours, covering both instructional topics and matches from major local and international tournaments. There are many other sources.

## Membership Fees

Fees were due at the end of December. If you have not yet renewed your membership, please do so as soon as you can. The fee for home-club members is \$50, for non home-club members \$10. The increase is due to increases in capitation fees to ABF and NSWBA, over which we have no control. The club component is unchanged from previous years. Fees can be paid at the club, or by bank transfer.

## From the Directors Chair – by Australian Director Matthew McManus

**Just because** an opponent claims without stating a line of play, it does not mean that you can tell them how to play the cards. With 5 cards to go, declarer has this club suit: A K Q J 2 opposite 7 6 5 4 3 and just puts their hand face up on the table. You have T98. You cannot make them play a low club first, so you can make a trick. If you object to the claim, you must call the director. The Laws set out a procedure that the director follows in the event of a disputed claim. If there is a careless way that the claimer could lose a trick, then it will be awarded to the opponents. However, an irrational line of play will not be forced upon the claimer. Here to play 2♣ first is clearly irrational and ridiculous.

## New Initiatives

The Committee has endorsed two new initiatives for the club.

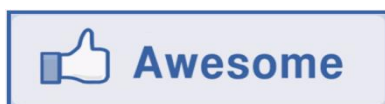
- ◆ The creation of a **'new player support group'**, made up of newer players, to provide a point of contact and channel of communication for new players to seek advice or raise issues of concern. Steve Anderson has agreed to coordinate this.
- ◆ The provision of a standby player for some sessions. This is not intended to provide a permanent partner, but to allow members who, on the spur of the moment, decide to come to a session to have a game. Ann Snow has kindly agreed to be a standby for the Thursday afternoon session. Jim Routledge and David Adams have agreed to take turns on a Wednesday. Volunteers are sought for other sessions.



**Standbys currently available for Wednesdays and Thursdays. We need to cover Monday, Tuesday and Saturday. Are you a volunteer?**

## Player Promotions

Last month 3 of our members moved up the bridge ranking scale. Congratulations players. Well done. May all your finesses come off.



NAME	RANK	TOTAL MPs
Speller, Colin	Bronze Life	423.54
Carter, Richard	Life	302.38
Anderson, Steve	Club	5.37

## From the Library



This month I'm reviewing a book by Derrick Browne. The book 'Beginners Play' is exactly that. The target audience are those newbies doing lessons or maybe those finished lessons but wanting a second way of looking at the game. Our club promotes the Joan Butts method of teaching bridge. However, Derrick and Joan are not at odds with each other. Their presentation is just a little different. Everything you need is there to get started and the info is backed by clear illustrations, explanations and quizzes.

Derrick Browne is the owner of the famous 'Trumps' private bridge club in Mosman. He's given lessons at our club on several occasions and has been well received. Derrick knows what he's talking about and using 'Beginners Play' as a backup to lessons will surely progress your game.

## Club Special Events

### ♦ Australia Day Pairs (27<sup>th</sup> January.)

Seventeen pairs competed in our 1st red-point event of the year. Winners and runners-up were...

N/S	1 <sup>st</sup>	Judy Wulff and Susan McCall	62.20%
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Chris Williams and Jan Clarke	61.31%
E/W	1 <sup>st</sup>	Chris Hasemore and Chris Hannan	59.26%
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hope Tomlinson and Martin Johnson	56.35%

### ♦ Swiss Pairs Championship (29<sup>th</sup> Jan., 5<sup>th</sup> Feb.)

A good field of 20 pairs, including an encouraging number of newer players, took part in this event, over two successive Mondays. Every pair managed to win at least one match. At the end of six 9-board matches the leading pairs were...

	1 <sup>st</sup>	Sally Clarke and Jan Clarke	85.63 VP
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hope Tomlinson and Jaan Oitmaa	80.83 VP
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Martin Johnson and Chris Hasemore	76.69 VP

### ♦ Valentine's Day Pairs (14<sup>th</sup> Feb.)

The winners and runners-up were...

N/S	1 <sup>st</sup>	Christine Hadaway and Donelle Foate	60.17%
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Chris Hannan and Chris Hasemore	53.27%
E/W	1 <sup>st</sup>	Barry Foster and Sylvia Foster	62.60%
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Qi Hasemore and Beryl Lowry	58.68%

## Away Special Events

### ♦ Central Coast Summer Interclub Teams – Gosford (1<sup>st</sup> Feb.)

A field of 18 teams, from all 4 Central Coast clubs, played over 7 rounds in this all-day event at the Leagues Club at Gosford. Results were...

1 <sup>st</sup>	Team Clarke -Sally Clarke, Di Coats, Chris Williams, Jan Clarke
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Team Tomlinson - Chris Hasemore, Martin Johnson, Jaan Oitmaa, Hope Tomlinson

### ♦ Gold Coast Congress

The GCC is one of the premier events on the Australian calendar. The event attracts players from all states as well as some International combatants. BWBC had a number of entrants but it was difficult to shine in an event such as this with many of Australia's BIG NAME players in attendance. From all reports it was a challenging experience but worth the pursuit.



## From the Internet

There's so much bridge stuff online it's easy to get lost. One fellow I like to follow, via YouTube, is Peter Hollands. This month I've chosen his video titled '[5 Common Bridge Mistakes You Make](#)'. In a 13 minute video he takes you through...

- ◆ Roman Keycard – There are a range of tools to use when seeking out a slam. Is Roman Keycard the best for your holding?
- ◆ Leading against Notrumps. Top of an honour sequence. Perils you face.
- ◆ Punishing Opponents for a Bad Overcall. Double or bid 2<sup>nd</sup> suit.
- ◆ Playing your highest winning card when there is a better alternative.
- ◆ Ruffing high or low.

## Coming Attractions

- ◆ Open Teams Championship (Also serves as Country Teams qualifier).  
Saturday, 2nd March, 9:30 start.
- ◆ Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March, Long Jetty Mixed Pairs qualifier, 9:30 start.
- ◆ Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March, Autumn Pairs, 12:30 start.
- ◆ Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March, Teams of 3, **12:00 start**.
- ◆ Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> March, Gosford Country Teams, 9:30 start.



## At the Bridge Table by Jaan Oitmaa

This month I discuss two hands. The first is from a regular session at our club, the second is the 'Canberra Hand' which was shown in the last newsletter.

**Hand 1** - This is board 25, from 15th January. For experienced players it is not so interesting, but I think it is quite instructive for newer players. It has many facets, both in bidding and play. I discussed it briefly after the session.

**At the Bridge Table – continued at the end of newsletter.**

*Stay safe out there – Cheers Barry and Jaan*



# At the Bridge Table by Jaan Oitmaa (continued from above)

## Hand 1

North is dealer and, in standard bidding should open 1 spade. Although only 11 hcp, it is a good hand. As well, the bid indicates a good lead to partner and will make it harder for the opponents to get into the bidding. What should East do? There are 15 hcp but the spade stopper is not great and the hand shape is poor. On the plus side, the hand contains aces and kings rather than lots of queens and jacks. I would overcall 1NT but with some misgivings. South will pass and West also has an interesting decision. There are 10 hcp, but East may have had a difficult decision and made a somewhat light overcall. I would venture 3NT, swayed by the good source of tricks from the heart suit. So we finish in 3NT, as happened at 5 of the 8 tables. Let's now look at the play. South is on lead, and has two

reasonable choices. Partner has bid spades, and it is almost always a good idea to lead partner's suit. The diamond Q also looks attractive. It is safe and, if partner has either A or K of the suit, you will have set up 4 defensive tricks at no risk. The drawback is that South has no side entry and may never get in to cash the winning diamonds. I would lead a spade, but either could be right.

Sitting in the East seat as declarer, and getting a spade lead, you count your top tricks and make a plan, before calling for a card from dummy. You see only 6 top tricks (1 heart, 2 diamonds, 3 clubs) so there is some work to do. You call for a small spade from dummy, North plays the A and you follow small. At my table North then played the spade K, with small spades from the other hands. This is not a great play, but here it didn't matter. At trick 3 North played the spade J which I won with my Q. There is no need for a hold-up play, as I know that North had 5 spades to start with, and South 2. I needed to establish some heart tricks and to ensure, if possible, that North did not get the lead to cash spade winners. So I went to dummy via the diamond K and led the heart Q, planning to lose a trick to South if necessary. North covered the Q, which was a mistake. I now had 10 tricks set up. Covering an honour with an honour is often a good play, but only if it serves to set up a trick for yourself or for partner. Notice that

BOARD 25					
BD: 25	♠ AKJT7			Dlr: N	
	♥ K762			Vul: EW	
	♦ 32				
	♣ 75				
♠ 32				♠ Q865	
♥ QJ98				♥ AT5	
♦ K87				♦ A64	
♣ A832				♣ KQ9	
	♠ 94				
	♥ 43				
	♦ QJT95				
	♣ JT64				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					11
E	3	2	3	2	3
W	3	2	3	2	3
					10
					15
					4

here, if North does not cover, declarer can make only 3 heart tricks, but still makes the contract.

On a subsequent heart trick South made a mistake, in discarding a small club. If a defender has a 4-card suit and can see that dummy has 4 cards in the same suit, it is almost always right to maintain length with dummy. This allowed declarer to make another undeserved overtrick.

This has been a rather long-winded discussion of a hand which experts would find straight forward, but I think it contains a surprising number of instructive points for newer players.

## Hand 2 – The Canberra hand

This is the hand from the recent Summer Festival of Bridge in Canberra, which was given in the January newsletter as a puzzle for readers; contract 4 spades by North. At almost all of the tables the lead was a small heart. Sitting North you see 6 possible losers, 2 each in spades diamonds and clubs. So you need some fortunate lie of the cards. The opening heart lead runs to your Ace. I'm not sure if this is best, but I'd draw trumps at this stage, fortunately losing 1 trick only. Then, lead a small diamond towards dummy. East cannot afford to play the ace, as this would give you 2 diamond tricks. In dummy with the diamond Q, you can then play the heart K, discarding a small club and the heart J discarding another small club. East will win this trick, but your heart T will now be a winner, and your 10th trick.

BOARD 20					
BD: 20	♠ AJT942				Dir: W
	♥ A				Vul: ALL
	♦ K54				
	♣ 973				
♠ Q7				♠ K6	
♥ 873				♥ Q9642	
♦ J72				♦ A963	
♣ KT652				♣ Q4	
	♠ 853				
	♥ KJT5				
	♦ QT8				
	♣ AJ8				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	1	2	4	4
S	1	1	2	4	3
E					
W					
					12
				6	11
					11

The lead that really makes life difficult for declarer is the unlikely club Q, which happened at 3 tables. Two went down while one made, I suspect with some help from defenders. You can, in fact, make 10 tricks after this lead also, but it is difficult, even seeing all 4 hands. As far as I can tell, this is the only way to do it

- ♦ Duck the opening lead, and win the 2<sup>nd</sup> club lead.
- ♦ Lead a small spade from dummy, and finesse unless West plays the Q. You need to keep West off lead at all costs. If you play the ace first, a clever East can throw the king, and you are sunk. Assuming East wins trick 3 with the spade K, their only safe return is another spade or a heart to your ace.

- ◆ You then unblock your heart ace and lead a small diamond towards dummy. The play then follows the same lines as after a heart opening, except you need to discard diamonds on the heart suit, rather than clubs. Dummy's 3rd trump is an entry to the winning heart ten.

