

The new scoring program

The club is trialling a new scoring program that was commissioned by the New Zealand Contract Bridge Association. The program is now in its third revision and appears to be much more reliable than its disastrous first version.

The major difference you will notice is that the score slips will no longer have to be match-pointed manually; so you can visit the bar a little earlier. But, please, still check the raw scores.

However, if you are interested, the program offers you some interesting information that can help to improve your bridge. On request you can obtain an individual score sheet that tells you how many match points you got on each board. By studying this, in conjunction with a hand record, you can see whether you competed to the right level (one of the most difficult things to judge in the pairs game). Regular studying of your personal score sheet is an invaluable method for improving your bidding judgement.

Items for the Newsletter

I'm always on the look out for copy. You can give me suggestions in person or via email (mike@cs.otago.ac.nz).

News Letter 2003

Taieri Bridge Club

Issue Number 73 January 2003



Frank Gradon

Frank Gradon has just relinquished to me the task of editing and producing the newsletter. One of Frank's regular newsletter features was to acknowledge individual contributions to the club but he was much too modest ever to publicise his own role. Quite literally there is not enough space in the entire issue to list all the tasks he has done, on a regular basis, over very many years. Frank has been on the club committee for almost every year since 1981 and has been president four times (including over the critical period when the club designed and built the present club house). At present Frank is the Club Secretary but his wisdom and energy continue to guide the club in every quarter of its activities. Thank you, Frank, for all that you have done and continue to do. Our club would not be the success it is today without you.

The hold-up

Often, playing in no-trumps, the opponents lead a suit in which our only stopper is the Ace. Do we hold it up or not? Try your skill at these problems (which get increasingly harder).

In each case South is declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♠5. South's basic plan in each case is to knock out the ♦A.

Problem 1

♠ T
♥ A 7
♦ K Q J T 8 6
♣ K Q 9 4

♠ A 6 3 2
♥ Q J 6
♦ 5 4
♣ A J T 8

Answers to hold-up problems

1. Hold up your ♠A. West has probably led their fourth best spade and holds four or five spades. If West holds four spades it doesn't matter because the suit is breaking 4-4 and they can only cash three spade winners. Likewise it doesn't matter if West has five spades and the ♦A:- you'll be one down whatever you do. But if East has ♦A the hold up pays off if you take the third round of spades; for East has no spade to return after winning the ♦A. But don't hold up on the third round of spades! West may shift to a heart and you might lose three spades, a heart and a diamond.

2. Don't hold up your ♠A. Almost certainly West has four spades only (as you have the three spades lower than the lead) so the suit is breaking 4-4. If you hold up, West may shift to a heart and then where will you be?

3. Don't hold up your ♠A. If spades are 4-3 it doesn't matter. If spades are 5-2 you have to worry about losing four spades when they take the ♦A. But it's more likely in this case that East has a doubleton honour; by going up with the Ace you may block the suit.

Conventions: Roman Key Card Blackwood

When you discover that your partnership is in the slam zone you often want to confirm that you are not missing an Ace. At Taieri, most players use the Gerber convention: 4♣ to ask for Aces to which the responses are 4♦, 4♥, 4♠, 4NT according to whether you hold 0, 1, 2, 3 Aces. Another popular convention is the Blackwood convention where 4NT is the asking bid (with responses 5♣, 5♦, 5♥, 5♠). Some players use an improved variant called Roman Key Card; this requires that you have already agreed the trump suit and uses the four aces together with the trump king as the *key cards*. A bid of 4NT asks for one of the following responses:

- 5♣ 0 or 3 key cards
- 5♦ 1 or 4 key cards
- 5♥ 2 key cards without the trump queen
- 5♠ 2 key cards with the trump queen

Some players are nervous about the ambiguity in the 5♣ and 5♦ responses. If in doubt bid as though you think partner has the weaker response; partner will work out what you are doing and bid on. I'll risk tempting fate and say that I have never had a mix-up over the ambiguity!

Problem 2

♠ T
♥ A 7
♦ K Q J T 8 6
♣ K Q 9 4

♠ A 4 3 2
♥ J 6
♦ 5 4 3
♣ A J T 8

Problem 3

♠ A 7 2
♥ A 7
♦ K Q J T 8
♣ K Q 9

♠ J 6 3
♥ J 6 3 2
♦ 5 4
♣ A J T 8

Humour

We had a partnership misunderstanding. My partner assumed I knew what I was doing.

History of the Taieri Bridge Club

As a relative newcomer to the club the only historical details I knew until recently were the honour boards displayed in our club house. But more senior members will recall the 25th anniversary of the club in 1998 when Ray Howes produced a booklet that surveyed the club's history from its foundation. Copies are still available - ask Frank Gradon if you would like to know more.

I recently heard some fascinating details about the club's early years from Beryl Bishop who was a founding member (having only learned the game two years previously!). Beryl recalled the times before our own club house was built when play took place in the rooms above (what is now) Rosie's Café. At that time there was a bakery downstairs. On several occasions, one of the members would bring along a rabbit for the weekly raffle. The winner was expected to take their prize downstairs and persuade the bakers to roast the rabbit for them in exchange for club alcohol. Almost certainly this

was illegal, so all names have been suppressed!

If any members have stories to tell about the earlier years of the club, please let me know. If they are not libellous you may see them in print. Watch this space!

Bridge Lessons

The club's lessons for beginners start next month on 18 February and this year they are to be given by Tamsin Meaney. These lessons are one of the main ways in which the club recruits new members (very important for our long term survival).

If you know anyone who might have an interest in taking up bridge, please bring the lessons to their attention.

In the early days of the club Beryl Bishop, who was then chief librarian at the Mosgiel Library, watched out for new residents of Mosgiel as they joined the library. She used to make a point of making them aware of the Bridge Club. Please be on the look out for similar opportunities to publicise our club!