

Otago Congress

Although there are no further tournaments at Taieri this year, club members may be interested in the Otago Congress that takes place on the weekend of 4,5 October. Saturday is teams day with an A point and a B point event, and Sunday is pairs day also with an A point and a B point event.

Hand evaluation

8

2003

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The club's AGM will take place on 4th November. There are a number of important issues that all members should think about before the AGM.

- ## Master classes

Thursday 2 October: Transfers
Tuesday 14 October: Defence against Precision
Thursday 4 November: Choosing the best lead

All are welcome. Starting time 7.30pm

Scoring Checks

Errors sometimes creep into the scoring. Players do not calculate the score correctly or maybe put it in the wrong column. The scorer may mis-key the entry or put it in the wrong column. The dog might chew the score sheet. To guard against mistakes, Baukje checks every score sheet for Mondays and Wednesdays against the computer entries, before running the ladder. That's a sterling effort by her that makes the scores reliable. Make sure you help by checking scores thoroughly before they go to the scorer.

Teams

Only 8 nights were allowed for the Teams in the 2003 Programme. Two extra nights are needed to complete the draw. We had one of them on 31st March. The next is to be held on Tuesday 28th October. Make sure you keep that night free, or arrange a substitute if you are not available. Looking ahead to next year: it takes a bit of time to assemble a team so it is not too early to start thinking about who will be in your team for 2004.

2004 Programme

The programme for next year goes to the printer in October. If you want changes, you can't leave them to the AGM. Tell a Committee member *now*!

The LAW of total tricks

Here's a familiar situation. Your side is bidding one suit, their side is bidding another, and both sides appear to be fairly evenly matched. To what level should you compete? You may be surprised to learn that there is a fairly reliable rule that can be applied: the LAW of total tricks. In its simplest form the LAW says you should bid to the level of the number of trumps you and your partner jointly hold. Suppose you are dealer and the auction goes

♣1-1♦-2♣-2♦

Should you bid 3♣? Let's look at a couple of examples. First, suppose you hold

♠ K T 7 3; ♥ A Q 7; ♦ Q T; ♣ A J 9 3

You should make the assumption that your partner held 4 clubs for their raise and not bid 3♣ because your total trump holding is 8 cards only. Rely on your partner to bid 3♣ if they hold 5 or more clubs. On the other hand, if you held

♠ K T 7 3; ♥ A Q; ♦ Q T; ♣ A J 9 7 3

that fifth trump should encourage you to bid 3♣.

I've only described here the LAW in its basic form and, of course, sometimes it leads you astray; but generally you will find it a very reliable guide.

Read Larry Cohen's book: "To bid or not to bid" to find out more about the LAW and how it can help you in those tricky judgements.

Elimination before an end-play

Elimination means to void your hand and dummy's of any suit the opponents can safely lead. Frieda had showed good technique on the previous page. She had eliminated diamonds before her first spade exit so the opponents could not lead them without conceding a ruff and discard (her duck of the first trick was essential). Then, once she had scored the J♣, she further eliminated clubs before her second spade exit.

Realising that she had performed literally in textbook fashion Frieda wondered aloud whether her play might qualify for a prize in the Mosgiel Declarer Play Competition. "But I think entries close tomorrow morning" she lamented. Gordon was quick to be helpful. "Don't worry, Frieda, I'll enter you tonight" he said. There was a moment of silence as both realised what he had said. Frieda was first to recover. "Silly man, you haven't brought your toothbrush" she said playfully putting aside her prudishness. Gordon replied in kind "Rats!".

Contributed humour

- 1.This is one for computer enthusiasts. Seen on a T-shirt: "Failure is not an option; it comes bundled with the software".
2. Veyr fwe polpep kown tihs. Msot sencentes cna be dunerstodo enve if teh wdors aer jmulbed up.

Four or five card majors?

Acol is essentially a natural bidding system.

When you open one of a suit you hold at least 4 cards in that suit. Many players have the agreement that opening bids 1♥ or 1♠ show at least 5 cards in the suit. The advantage of that is their partner can safely raise on three card support. The disadvantage is that there are some hands that have neither a five card major nor a four card minor suit. These hands must be treated slightly artificially. For a 12-14 HCP balanced hand there is no trouble: open 1NT. If you are too strong for 1NT you can either agree to open your better minor suit, or always open 1♣ (which is now occasionally a two card suit).

Some players swear by "five card majors" but, in truth, the advantage one way or another is very marginal. If you like the simplicity of four card majors you will rarely come to any harm: there are very few balanced hands where you need to open 1♥ or 1♠ with only four cards anyway. Such hands would have to contain 15 or more HCP, have 4 cards in both hearts and spades, or have 4 cards in one major and exactly three in the other suits. Some partnerships compromise: when they open 1♠ they guarantee 5 cards but opening 1♥ only guarantees 4 cards.

My recommendation: do what you like!

Frieda executes an endplay

Gordon Rhode had just presented Frieda Mayer with a book on declarer play and they were seated on Gordon's settee reading the chapter entitled "Throw-ins and end plays". Puzzled she said "I don't understand how anything interesting can be learnt about a hand that you throw in, Gordon". Gordon, who had read a little further was able to enlighten her. "Throw-in means to present your opponent with the lead at such a point that anything they lead will be to your advantage, Frieda". Frieda sniffed: "Is that all? They should have said so. Remember that hand I played last week?" Frieda, South, had played in two hearts and the lead had been the K♦.

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

There appeared to be 8 tricks with no chance of a ninth. But Frieda was inspired. She ducked the first diamond and took the second. Then she drew trumps ending in dummy, ruffed her last diamond, and exited with a spade, won by West with the Jack. This was the position with West on lead.

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

Unwilling to give a ruff and discard by leading a diamond, and unwilling to play the bare A♠, West played a club. This allowed Frieda to make her J♣. She then played two further rounds of clubs and again exited with a spade. Poor West was again thrown in, and now forced to lead a diamond or club, and Frieda got her ruff and discard. So she actually made 10 tricks which gave them a top board. What is the best defence for East-West?

Answer on page 8.