

The club will again offer lessons for beginners this year. The lessons are weekly with the first one on Tuesday 15 February. They are planned to continue until May.

The lessons are very important as an avenue for recruiting new members so if you know of anyone who you think will enjoy bridge please encourage them to come along. No-one need be intimidated! Tamsin is giving the lessons and you can refer any recruits you make to her either by phone (489-1317) or email (tamsin.meaney@otago.ac.nz).

I love animals, they taste great.

"Very funny, Scotty. Now beam down my clothes."

Make it idiot proof and someone will make a better idiot.

He who laughs last thinks slowest!

Hard work has a future payoff. Laziness pays off now.

Consciousness: that annoying time between naps.

Taieri Bridge Club

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One of the highlights of the new season is the January tournament hosted by the Alexandra bridge club (whose premises are in Clydel!). This year it proved even more popular than usual with 47 pairs competing; it was won by Paul Freeland and Arlene Schwartz of the Otago Bridge Club. One of the reasons for its popularity is the unusual format: it is played on consecutive evenings with no play during the day, thereby allowing players to relax in the congenial surrounds of Central Otago. This year, because of our dismal summer weather, those surrounds were less congenial than normal and there was some doubt about whether the usual return route through Roxburgh would be passable. Despite this most of us managed to have a very relaxing time sampling the products of various wineries, or touring around the large number of art and garden displays that usually coincide with this weekend of bridge. Highly recommended.

My favourite bridge site

...is Frank Stewart's column at
www.baronbarclay.com/sheinwold/SHEINWOL.html.
 It has an interesting hand every day. Consider this
 one from 23 January.

NORTH			
♠ J 10 9 2			
♥ A Q 10 8 3			
♦ 9 2			
♣ 5 3			
WEST		EAST	
♠ Q 8 7		♠ K 6 5	
♥ 6 4 2		♥ K 9 7	
♦ J 8 7 5		♦ Q 6 4	
♣ J 10 8		♣ 9 7 4 2	
SOUTH			
♠ A 4 3			
♥ J 5			
♦ A K 10 3			
♣ A K Q 6			
North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

if he does bid 5♠ he carries the can (and buys the drinks if 5♠ and 5♣ both fail).

Suppose you are in doubt about whether to bid 5♠ or to double? You may pass. This would be *forcing*, and your partner must bid 5♠ or double. These forcing passes are one of the most difficult aspects of bidding and different partnerships have different styles. A general rule is that if your side has bid freely to game and the opponents sacrifice then any pass (except in the pass-out seat!!) is forcing. What does "bid freely" mean? Simply that you would have got there even if the opponents had not intervened; in other words you are not just competing.



Offensive and defensive hands

You've had a simple auction beginning with your opening bid of 1♠.

1♠ - 2♣ - 3♠ - P

4♠ - P - P - 5♣

Obviously the opponents are sacrificing and your partnership must either bid 5♠ or double them. But which? Of course, vulnerability and whether it is pairs or teams scoring will influence you but what about your hand itself? In other words, is your hand offensive or defensive?

If your hand was

♠ A Q J 7 6 4; ♥ Q J 3; ♦ K Q 7; ♣ 2

you should definitely consider bidding 5♠. You have little defensive strength: no quick tricks except the A♠ (which may not take a trick).

On the other hand, if you hold

♠ A J 4 3; ♥ A K 2; ♦ 9 8 7 6; ♣ K 2

the situation is entirely different. Here you have three fairly sure tricks, possibly four; and with your 4 card spade suit no inclination to declare 5♠. So double.

When you make either of these bids you are offering your partner a strong opinion but not a royal command; if you double he is at liberty to pull to 5♠ (if, say, his spades were very long and his initial 3♠ bid was made largely on shape). But

Here's Frank Stewart's commentary following the J♣ lead.

"One quality that makes an expert is that he takes nothing for granted.

In a European Championship, one declarer at 3NT took the ace of clubs and thought nine tricks would be a snap: He promptly let the jack of hearts ride. East played low, else South would run dummy's hearts. South then had eight tricks: two hearts, two diamonds, three clubs and a spade. He tried to set up another by leading the ace and a low spade, but West rose with the queen and led a heart, attacking dummy's entry to the long spade.

DOWN ONE

South had to finesse, and East produced the king, cashed the king of spades and led a club. South then lost a club and a diamond and went down one. In the replay, John Armstrong of Great Britain took nothing for granted: He led a low spade at the second trick. East won and returned a club, but Armstrong won and let the jack of hearts ride, winning. He then led the ace and a low spade and was sure of two spades, two hearts, three clubs and two diamonds."

Don't you like that?

Voluptua learns a lesson

Voluptua was bemoaning to her Aunt Frieda that her declarer play needed improving. "Honestly, Aunt Frieda, I usually don't understand a word that Gordon is saying". Frieda was understanding. "Don't worry, Voluptua" she said "I also find him very obscure sometimes. Now what would you like to know?".

"I've heard Gordon say something about 'eliminating your opponents'" she replied. "That sounds like a very useful thing to know". Frieda laughed. "Gordon would have been talking about eliminating the side suits before giving the opponents the lead" she said. "Then they may have to lead a critical suit and save you a guess; it's also called stripping the hand and throwing in the opponents" she continued. Frieda then spent a good hour on coaching Voluptua in this useful technique. At the next club night, Voluptua was partnering Randy and was looking forward to impressing him in another way (the usual way still being a winner). Their first opponents were the odious Weasel and Ferret. Steadfastly ignoring their lascivious leers, Voluptua (South) bid accurately to a 4♠ contract and received the K♥ lead.

Her brow furrowed, Voluptua considered her chances. "What rotten luck" she thought. "I have nine top tricks but can't ruff anything in dummy

♠ K T 9 2
♥ T 2
♦ J 7 6
♣ A K 9 3

♠ 6 3
♥ K Q J 8
♦ K 3 2
♣ J T 8 5

♠ 8 7
♥ 7 6 5 4 3
♦ A T 9 8
♣ 7 6

♠ A Q J 5 4
♥ A 9
♦ Q 5 4
♣ Q 4 2

for my tenth. If only they had led diamonds I could have established a diamond winner."

Then she remembered Frieda's wisdom and a smile lit up her face. She knew exactly what to do. She would win the lead with the A♥ and draw trumps. After that she would play three rounds of clubs and ruff the fourth round. Then she would throw in the opponents with a heart. They would either have to play a heart (or club) for her to ruff in dummy or lead diamonds themselves.

Smiling at Randy she said: "Just watch me strip, Randy". Randy contained a grin and gravely replied: "I'm looking forward to that, Voluptua; I know you'll do it beautifully". The contract was duly made but Voluptua remained puzzled at the outbreak of mirth all round.