

From the Chair

I have several matters to mention this time as I come to the end of my term of office as the Gauteng Bridge Union Chair. I have served in this position for 6 years (and was on the GBU Committee before that as the Secretary) and feel it is definitely time for a new person with some fresh ideas to take on this role.

The GBU AGM is going to be held early this time, on Saturday 20th January at 12pm at The Links, as the current administrators and the incoming committee I am sure want to be organised for the SABF AGM which is to be held in February at their annual National Congress in Cape Town. We need to think carefully which Gauteng people can best serve our interests on the SABF Committee and put forward our nominations timeously. I have enjoyed being involved enormously and hope I have managed to keep bridge in Gauteng running smoothly. And in difficult times with Covid rearing its head for far longer than anyone ever thought. We had to help bridge players learn how to use their computer for online bridge (both BBO and RealBridge) but I naively thought that once life had returned to relative normality, face to face bridge would just resume again as before. I was wrong! It has taken a great deal of effort to get clubs going as so many in our bridge community find online bridge so convenient and easy! I hear all the time - no need to get dressed up or take the car out, and hey guess what, if I don't have a partner I can just use a robot! Evening bridge seems to be an absolute non starter too. On a personal note I have enjoyed all the many people I have met during my term of office and I am sure many of these will be lifelong friends. I have never felt alone enjoying throughout the advice, expertise and camaraderie of the committee members who served with me. (I must make mention of James Grant who has 'held my hand' all the time)

The next topic is New Year Resolutions! On a personal level I want to play better bridge and be STEADIER! I think that is what sets the top players ahead of average club players like me. They never have a poor outing whereas I can be top one week and bottom the next. I want to analyse the hands on a regular basis

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and try to learn from my disasters.

I want to urge players to pay their club and SABF and GBU fees very smartly! I have set a good example here by already paying mine in to one of the two clubs where I currently play! Please pay through your club and a reminder that even if you are paying BBO competitions only (probably The Links events) you still need both club and SABF/GBU membership. The annual SABF fees are R250 and GBU fees remain unchanged at R50 making a total of R300. So very reasonable for your regular bridge 'fix' when you consider what other sports charge. Costs have risen a lot these past six years and if you think of eating out, movie tickets or even just an outing at a coffee shop, really these fees are very reasonable.

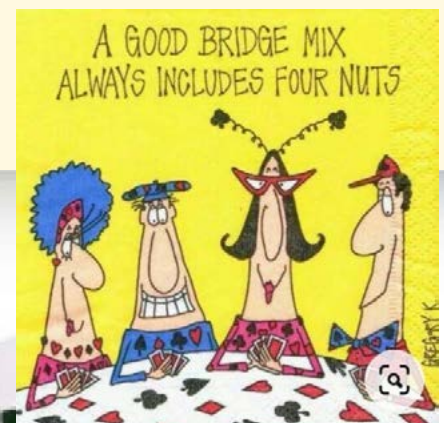
If you have not been at live bridge this past year please DO it in 2024. If you live in Joburg, come and experience The Links. Their latest Newsletter promises even more events and the Saturday afternoon bridge is gaining in popularity and is now known for great organisation, good camaraderie and wonderful teas! The Links and GBU in a joint initiative are staging a full day PAIRS EVENT on Sunday 28th January. Come along and be part of the fun. A great day out for bridge players of all abilities. *A separate advert appears later on in this Newsletter and more details can be obtained from Deirdre Ingersent on 082 4304140 or Rob Stephens on 072 4316599.*

And now to 2 things connected with age! One regret I have is that despite being a retired teacher I have been unable to attract any young people to the game. St.Mary's, the elitist private school at which I worked, felt the girls were too busy with chess and various forms of debating and public speaking, to add bridge to their cultural extramurals choices. Some private schools have had some interested pupils over the years. To introduce bridge into township schools seems an impossible goal to achieve. I regard this as a failure on my part. At the other end of the age spectrum I know we have lost many players this year. Many have been publicly acknowledged, but if we have omitted anyone I am sorry. May all those members of our bridge community who have passed on RIP.

Lastly, I was notified as a TD that there were to be changes to two rules in January 2024. When I rang Sid Ismail to find out, he told me these laws 73, about Communication, Behaviour, Tempo and Deception, and Law 89 which talks about Prohibited Behaviour and Reprehensible Conduct, did not apply to our Gauteng clubs. We are well behaved apparently which was good to hear!

That's it! Yours in bridge,

Deirdre Ingersent





DEFENSIVE PLAY - The Opening Lead

Researched by Deirdre Ingersent who was asked about this one Saturday afternoon at The Links. (Whole bridge books have been written on this so below are just some pointers to consider!)

Choosing the opening lead is of great importance and a 2 step operation. First you must choose which suit to lead and then you must select the correct card from within the suit. Deciding on the best suit to attack is considered the most difficult aspect of defence.

Against a NT contract, it is usually best to start the suit in which the defenders have the most cards. So your own longest suit is the best bet probably.

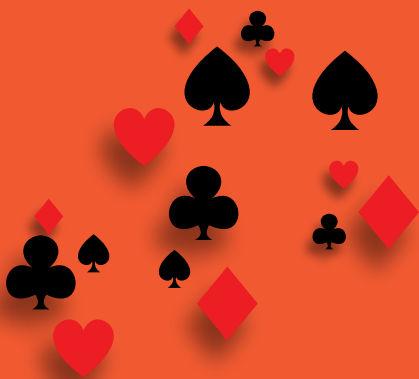
Against a suit contract it is important to make a safe lead, one that doesn't give away a trick. An ideal lead is a side suit headed by the AK or the KQJ. Other good combinations to lead from include KQ10, QJ10, QJ9, J109 etc. A passive lead from a worthless holding is also relatively safe.

It can occasionally be right to lead trumps, especially true if the bidding has indicated that declarer is planning to ruff losers in dummy.

A singleton in a side suit may be a good lead if partner has an entry and can give you a ruff. However don't lead a short suit when you have long trumps yourself. Now it would be better to lead your own best suit in the hope that declarer will be forced to ruff and then perhaps eventually you will hold more trumps than him!

Once you have decided which suit to lead the choice of card is easy. If you have two cards it is correct to lead the higher one. **A4**, **Q7**, **98**, **42**. With three cards lead top of nothing if all the cards are small, **972**, **863**, **654** but if you have two small and an honour start with the small one 2 from **Q82** and 4 from **J64**. It is recommended that if you hold **A73** best to start with the Ace in case declarer or dummy only has a singleton. If you hold 3 cards in a suit of which the top two are touching, it is correct to lead the top card **QJ5** and **KQ2**, **J109**. When defending NT the sequence should be at least 3 cards long.e.g. **KQJ** or **KQ10** also acceptable.

And that's it in a nutshell!



I thought it might be silly but gave it a go,
I bid 3D.

Ho Ho Ho.

Next came a double.

Now my partner pre-empts trouble.

Decisions, decisions what to bid

So weak, yet maybe a stronger suit to fib?

Then she remembered to support the FIT

And bid 6D, leaving us in SHIT..

When all the tricks were said and done

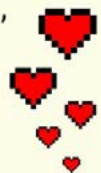
8 were ours and the balance made up the sum.

Such a clever partner I had ,

A score of -500 was not at all bad.

Opposition missed their major slam

Wham Bam thank you Mam !!!!!



I enjoy playing The BBO challenge against my brother who resides in the USA. Today I pick up a hand where I can gain some IMPs as it is easy to misplay.

Our first obstacle comes when we reveal, at all vul, this awkward hand as the dealer –

S newmoon

♠ 95
♥ J963
♦ AKQJ5
♣ A8

What do we open?

1. 1NT? With out points concentrated in the minors, it looks wrong. I may consider 1NT with half my points in the majors;

2. 1D? We can raise a 1H response to 3H, but what do we rebid after 2C, 1S or 1NT?

After 2C a rebid of 2D is an underbid surely;

We decide to open 1D and we unashamedly reverse into 2H after the expected 1S response.

4H reverberates from the other side.

N Robot

♠ AKJ42
♥ A854
♦
♣ Q975

W	N	E	S
			1♦
P	1♠	P	2♥
P	4♥	P	P
P			



You receive the lead of the CJ against 4H and you cover to promote the 9. East plays the CK and we win the ace.

We draw the HA as a matter of course and both follow small.

QUIZ: What do we play next?

S newmoon

♠ 95
♥ J963
♦ AKQJ5
♣ A8

4♥ S

NS: 0 EW: 0

Bridge Tips

Hi Deirdre,

You asked me for some bridge tips. Here are 2.

Both should be useful for intermediate players. I don't easily relate to beginners and experts don't need my help.

OVERCALLS TO THE OPENING 1NT BID

Most players at the club play Hamilton or some variation of that. To this can be added a small variation. If the bidding goes 1NT X – The most used method shows the equivalent in strength of the 1NT bid or better. The limitation of that is that it does not occur often enough. It is better to use the X as showing a 6 card minor which happens a lot more often than a hand showing 15 + points. One can expand this variation to show a 6 card minor OR a strong NT hand. A bit like killing 2 birds with one stone.

PENALTY vs TAKEOUT DOUBLES

Here are 2 interesting examples:-

1. If the bidding goes 1D - 3S - X. Then this should be used as a takeout double. Naturally the 1D bidder can leave this in for penalties if he has a decent S suit.
My feeling is that one should play this up to the 4H level. This is because with an overcall of 4S one can use 4NT as a takeout bid. Then a double of 4Ss is for penalties and a 4NT bid is takeout.
2. If the bidding goes 2H -3C X. Then the X is penalties. It should be easier to remember this if there is logic to the system so here goes. The responder to the opening bid cannot be doubling to ask about 1 of the 2 unbid suits as the 2H bidder has already indicated that he is weak with long hearts.

submitted by Nathan Herscovitz



This hand was first published in a Newsletter dated November 2005 and submitted by Val Boom. It was entitled "Xmas Special" and was billed as a year end giggle! Certainly VERY WEIRD!

	NORTH	
	♠ -	
	♥ -	
	♦ 98765432	
	♣ AJ1075	
WEST		EAST
♠ A		♠ KQJ102
♥ AQ1095432		♥ KJ876
♦ KQJ		♦ A10
♣ Q		♣ K
	SOUTH	
	♠ 9876543	
	♥ -	
	♦ -	
	♣ 986432	

The bidding went as follows:

E	S	W	N
1 Spade	Pass	2 Hearts	4NT
5 Hearts	6 Clubs	6 Hearts	7 Clubs

Double

The lead was Ace Spades

The play was not too difficult at all! (Ruff opening lead, ruff a diamond, club to Ace and ruff another diamond - eventually setting up diamond suit)

The result was 7 Clubs doubled bid and made, holding 5 points in the combined hands but 4 VOIDS!

Whoever would actually bid like that??

submitted by Deirdre Ingersent

An interesting hand submitted *by Craig Gower* and originally published in June 2004. This hand comes with a cautionary warning!

1Heart - (2 Diamonds) - X (doubled for penalty) - All pass

Dummy's Hand

S K687

H Q432

D -

C 97632

Declarer asked "Where are the diamonds?"

Dummy replied "The diamonds are in the safe!"

Overcaller's Hand

S 53

H A74

D 108652

C KQ

The result DOWN 5!

Craig comments "I think the diamonds were in the safe hands of the opponents! So the moral of the story is only make overcalls with good suits!"

submitted by Craig Gower

Save the date
28 January 2024
09:30 @ The Links

**PRIZES
GALORE**

Looking forward to seeing you
Warm regards
Joel & Deirdre

ALL DAY PAIRS TOURNAMENT

*Join us for scrumptious
teas and delicious lunch!*



Bridge S A The Links
Bank: Nedbank
Account #: 1756009600
Account type: Current
account
Branch code: 198765
Reference: 28Jan +
name/sabf#

PAYMENT
R295



Be ready to raise the stakes.



BRIDGE TIP _____ **by Jeff**

When the bidding is over, and you are declarer; after the opening lead is made and partner tables the dummy, even if you think partner has bid the hand terribly, and you're in a shocking contract; don't react! Give partner a regular 'thank you' and get to work. Many an impossible contract has come home when the defence, not realising the great plight declarer is in, slip up and throw a couple of tricks away. But if you comment about partner's poor bidding, besides upsetting him/her, you give the game away to the opponents. Save discussion and disagreements for after the session.

An important part of declarer play comes under the heading 'The Danger Hand'. On some hands, mostly in a NT contract, one can see that one or the other opponent is the 'dangerous' one; and then the idea is to try to avoid allowing that player to gain the lead. For some reason people get confused about which defender is in fact the dangerous one, so let's have a look at a hand which arose recently.

South dealer, NS vul

	NORTH	
	♠ AQ32	
	♥ KJ2	
	♦ Q7	
	♣ AJ105	
WEST		EAST
♠ 1054		♠ KJ97
♥ 954		♥ Q873
♦ AJ943		♦ 1085
♣ 64		♣ 72
	SOUTH	
	♠ 86	
	♥ A106	
	♦ K62	
	♣ KQ983	

South **North**
1C 1S
1NT 3NT Opening lead: D4

The bidding was pretty straightforward. After South rebid a 12-14 1NT, North could see that there were not enough points for slam (usually 33 required when both hands are balanced), and so he settled for game.

Declarer correctly put up the queen of diamonds, which held the trick. When dummy has the doubleton honour there's no point in letting it run around to the king, as the queen will then be on its own, whereas if the queen does win, the king is at least still protected by a small card.

Declarer has nine easy tricks (1 spade, 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 5 clubs), but playing Pairs, where the overtrick is so important, one must not quietly settle for the contract if there is any way to find another trick (or two), without of course, risking the contract. The question is – who is the danger hand, east or west?

Clearly west has the ace of diamonds with length, having led fourth highest – and it is west who will be able to run off his diamonds if our king is captured. But it is in fact EAST who is the DANGER HAND, because if east does get the lead, then a diamond return will expose the king to capture. But if west gains the lead, the king of diamonds will not be under any immediate threat, and will constitute a second stopper. The spade finesse may provide an extra trick, but if it loses, the contract is in danger of going down. East will win and return a diamond THRU' the K6, and west will make four diamond tricks.

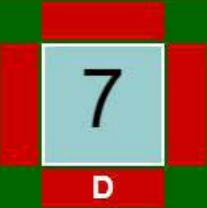

The answer is to take a heart finesse, but INTO the 'safe' hand, west. It doesn't matter whether this is done immediately or later, but it is correct at some point to play a heart to dummy's king, and then either run the jack, or play small to the ten. On the layout above this will be the tenth trick – but if it loses there is no risk to the contract, and nine tricks will still be made. And if west wins the queen of hearts and slips up by continuing diamonds to establish them, then ten tricks will again be there for the taking.

Correct technique on this hand is to resign the fate of this hand in the lives of the K, Q and 10 of trumps. Let the defenders make those trumps but nothing more. This means that we have to discard the C8 with some urgency.

We will play the top spades and once both follow to two rounds, all is well.

How the hand was played: <http://tinyurl.com/ymqn78te>

The full hands were:

	N Robot ♠ AKJ42 ♥ A854 ♦ ♣ Q975	W N E S P 1♠ P 1♦ P 4♥ P 2♥ P P P
	W Robot ♠ Q763 ♥ 7 ♦ 942 ♣ J10643	
	S newmoon ♠ 95 ♥ J963 ♦ AKQJ5 ♣ A8	4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

If you can work out that the defenders hold the HK, KQ and H10 precisely after the first round of trumps, be prepared to concede those tricks to safeguard your contract. Since this is IMPs, if my brother makes a paltry overtrick (possible) the difference is small, but we are in the money if he goes -1 or -2....

If you drew a second round of trumps after the ace, be prepared for a roller-coaster ride!

===== finis =====

DARLING DAISY'S TIPS FOR BEGINNERS!

As this is the last in this series, the tips are random and hopefully pointers for average club players.

1. DON'T BID YOUR HAND TWICE!

Once you have described your hand, you should normally shut up and let partner make the decisions.

Example No 1

S 5
H 75
D AQ107532
C J84

You would open a pre-emptive 3 D with this and when partner bids 3NT, you pass. You do not worry about the singleton spade. Your first bid showed partner exactly what you hold.

Example No 2

S AJ 952
H Q
D AQ107
C 742

Here you would open 1 S, partner responds 1 NT, you rebid 2D and when your partner rebids 2 H, you pass. You have already shown at least 5 S and 4 D, so partner will not be expecting to find you with many hearts.

Another tip is if you make any sort of limit bid (such as a 1NT opening or overcall), again the onus is on you to let partner take the decision. You have already shown your points.

2. GIVE NOTHING AWAY

Suits with honours scattered around the table are often dangerous to play. Whichever side plays the suit first often blows a trick. While everyone knows not to lead into a simple tenace, leading into a split tenace can be just as costly.

	S K104	
	H AKQ10	
	D Q75	
	C K97	
S J852		S Q73
H 6		H J4
D A102		D K963
C J10862		C A543
	S A96	
	H 987532	
	D J84	
	C Q	

South is playing in the contract of 4 Hearts. West leads the C J. East wins with the Ace, dropping South's Q. A club return into the K 9 holding would clearly be a bad idea. The danger signs are also there in spades and diamonds as East has honours in those suits and can see the honours in dummy. The only safe return is a trump as then declarer has to make the first play in the frozen suits and ends up a trick short. If defender leads either of the side suits it would give away the contract.

3. NINE TRICKS IS EASIER THAN ELEVEN

Nine tricks are usually easier to make than eleven. This works when one of the partnership holds 6 cards in a minor suit.

Example No 1

You hold

S 84
H K63
D J7
C AKJ852

Your opening bid would be 1 Club and if partner shows 12 points balanced, then settle on 3NT. Do not consider a game in clubs.

Example No 2

S A5
H A6
D AK10742
C Q83

You would open 1D here and even if partner only makes a simple raise to 2D bid 3NT. You expect the D to run giving you 8 certain tricks and hopefully there will be something of value in partner's hand, e.g. a K in H or S to give you a 9th trick.

4. ATTACK THE DANGER HAND FIRST

If you are declarer and need to lose the lead twice, the order in which you lose the lead can be critical. If the opponents are going to set up one or more winners, you want to attack the entry to the opponents with those winners before they are ready to cash them.

West is Declarer	East is Dummy
S A Q	S K 6
H A 64	H K 73
D Q J 10 8	D A 9 7 3
C K Q J 8	C 10 7 6 3

You are West in 3NT and get a spade lead.

In this hand S opened 3 spades so N will hold a doubleton spade and South 7 spades. You will go down if S has K diamonds and Ace clubs. as entries so take the diamond finesse first (attacking the K diamonds entry in the dangerous S hand while you still have a stopper) before knocking out the Ace clubs. If it loses S will continue with spades but N will no longer have a spade to return to p so when you play the clubs no danger as you have other suits covered. Slightly more advanced thinking but definitely worth the effort!