

## From the Chair

As I am writing this on Monday May 1st, I feel firstly I must talk about the results achieved by GBU members in the SABF National Congress which has just ended in Cape Town. And furthermore to say how proud I am of all our players who participated. An expensive exercise these days for Gautengers as an airticket or lots of petrol if driving, accommodation and probably higher living expenses than at home. There were 66 couples in the PAIRS EVENT, 15 from Gauteng. SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS go to Robert Stephens and Bernard Donde who won, then a half Gauteng pair in 3rd place Craig Gower and Alon Apteker, and in 5th position Val Bloom and Jeff Sapire. The TEAMS Event had an entry of 24 teams, about 7 overall from Gauteng (some pure Gauteng teams and others participating with friends from other provinces). Here it was 2 Gauteng teams fighting it out in the Head To Head Final. So MANY CONGRATULATIONS to Robert Stephens, Bernard Donde, Craig Gower and Alon Apteker on winning and James Grant, Larry Chemaly, Nicky Bateman and Tas Nestoridis for finishing as runners-up.

Secondly, please pay up your subscription fees to GBU and SABF if you have not already done so. You are liable for the R250 even if you are only playing online events!! It is a small amount to pay for your regular bridge 'fix'! I am sure all the readers of this Newsletter have done so but please let's get the word out to the wider bridge community. I am sifting through lists of names at present to help with this. If someone has passed on please let us know. Or changed email address. My lists date back to 2017 and I am sure much has happened since then. My contact details are email - [dingersent51@gmail.com](mailto:dingersent51@gmail.com) or cellphone 082 4304140.

Thirdly, although evening face to face bridge seems to have died a death which is a very sad fact for older members who remember how popular the JBC on a Monday evening was, daytime clubs are in operation. All these face to face clubs need support so please make the effort and go along. The Links Saturday afternoon is increasing in numbers and Thursday morning, the Supervised Play club is popular, but what has happened to the Wednesday afternoon club at The Links. It is open with Helen Kruger organising but at present only enough members for one section. Betty Ravenscroft is doing sterling work at Ferndale Bowling Club too. It is the most fun and the purist form of the game! The GBU is hoping to host its own Mini Congress soon for Gauteng members so watch out for more details of this in the not too distant future!

Lastly, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any ideas for what you would like to see happen with bridge in Gauteng, or if there is something special you would like to read about in the Newsletter.

I wrote to my stepmother today who lives in Cornwall in the UK, has reached 97, plays duplicate bridge and regularly attends two face to face clubs, and told her how much bridge has enriched my life. Hopefully keeping the brain going and definitely a source of friends. I could not envision my life without it now!

Yours in bridge,  
**Deirdre Ingersent**

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# Online Play - A million and counting

## Learn the theory and then take the quiz

*The conversation between Rob Stephens (Links Bridge Club Manager and a top young bridge player who has represented South Africa many times) and myself had us decide to include this article in our latest bulletin*

Bridge, like Baseball and Cricket, is a game packed with statistics. The advent of online play has made it possible to compile a massive amount of information.

In this series, we are analyzing 1,000,000 deals which were played online. These deals cover a wide range of level of play and were provided by Stephen Pickett with Bridge Browser.

**On how many deals was 3 No-Trump the final contract?**

Answer: 181,119 – or 18.1% of all deals.

**On how many deals was 4-of-a-major the final contract?**

Answer: 248,980 – or 24.9 % of all deals.

- 3 No-Trump was the final contract on 18.1% of deals.

That was the singular most popular contract.

- 4 Hearts alone was 11.7%.
- 4 Spades alone was 13.2%.

All three of these pieces of information are not surprising. You'd expect 3 No-Trump (the lowest-trick game) to be most frequent. You'd also expect 4 Spades to be more common than 4 Hearts (you can bid 4♠ over 4♥, but not vice versa). So, 3 No-Trump, 4 Hearts and 4 Spades combined account for 43% of all deals played.

### FYI:

5 Clubs was played on 2.3% of all deals and

5 Diamonds on 2.9% (so, a game contract in a minor occurred on 5.2% of 1,000,000 deals). That means that GAME was bid on just less than half of all deals played. The most common slam contracts were 6 Hearts, 6 Spades, and 6 No-Trump – each occurring approximately 14000 times out of the 1,000,000 deals (or 1.4% of the time for each). Cumulatively, small slams were bid on 5.7% of all deals. Grand slams (with 7 No-Trump the most common one) were bid on a little more than 5000 of 1,000,000 deals – or about half a percent. I suspect the number would be higher in an expert game.

### SUMMARY:

Slam (small or grand) was bid on 6.2% of the 1,000,000 deals.

When the final contract was 1 No-Trump, it was set about 29% of the time and made 71% of the time (often with overtricks).



*About the Author • Larry is widely regarded as one of the world's best bridge teachers and is as close to a household name as you can probably get in the world of bridge. He has been named ACBL Player of the Year, ACBL Honorary Member of the Year, 2020 Hall of Famer, and has won a total of 25 National Bridge Tournaments. He's also a regular contributor to bridge magazines and has written and produced many best-selling, award winning bridge books, cd's /computer software, videos and webinars.*

Here is how many tricks were taken (in order of frequency):

- 7 → on 25% of all 1 No-Trump contracts.
- 8 → on 23% of all 1 No-Trump contracts.
- 6 → on 17% of all 1 No-Trump contracts.
- 9 → on 15% of all 1 No-Trump contracts.
- 5 → on 8% of all 1 No-Trump contracts.
- 10 → on 6% of all 1 No-Trump contracts.

When the 1NT bid was a direct overcall (passed out in 1NT), the overcaller averaged 45% at match-points and went slightly minus in IMP expectancy.

In contrast, when the auction went 1NT-Pass-Pass-Pass, this was very good for opener's side. At matchpoints it resulted in an average of 58% and at IMPs a gain of nearly 1/2 imp per board. These are remarkably high averages. It proves what I've always known: "If at all possible, interfere over the opponents' 1NT opening, especially in balancing seat."

When one side opens the bidding, how likely is it that they will be the declaring side?

75% – a number that might have been guessed. The non-opening side plays 25% of the hands.

Some more trivia (or is it minutia?):

The non-opening side played in a grand slam (keep in mind, it could have been a sacrifice) on only 471 of 1,000,000 deal (note that 10,000 would be 1%, so this is a really low percentage, as expected). Of those grand slams, 26 were a contract of 7 No-Trump for the non-openers side. Contrast that to 1350 contracts of 7 No-Trump reached by the opener's side.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Opener's Side played it in 1 Club (that would be 1♣-Pass-Pass-Pass, in case you are having a bad-brain day) on only 1997 of 1,000,000 deals – a fifth of a percent. In case you are really having a bad-brain day, I will tell you that the non-opener's side played in 1 Club zero times – of course. They did play in 1 Diamond (that would be a 1♦ opening and then the other side buys it in 1♦) on only 237 out of a million – a rare occurrence indeed.

What was the most popular contract by each side?

For opener's side, 3 No-Trump (as we've already seen in this series), on 165,240 – or 16.5% of all deals. For non-opener's side, 4 Spades on 31910 – or 3.2 % of all deals.

I know that this question will remind people of "The LAW of Total Tricks," but I am innocently asking: on any given deal, what is the most likely division of the thirteen tricks?

Answer: nine and four.

The most likely number of tricks to be taken (by the declaring side) is nine – it happens 21% of the time. Close behind (in second place) is ten tricks – on 20 % of all deals played.

The full table is below (note: "0" includes deals which were passed out).

**# TRICKS BY DECLARING SIDE**

Tricks	%
0	1.52
1	0.02
2	0.05
3	0.13
4	0.54
5	1.81
6	4.84
7	10.02
8	16.19
9	21.01
10	20.21
11	14.13
12	7.26
13	2.27

**What is the most likely opening bid?**

Let's start at the very beginning: 1♣ is the winner. Of course, some of this is influenced by system. Players using a strong Club system open 1♣ on all good hands. Balancing that out to some effect is the fact that they also open all minimum hands (that don't fit 1NT or 1MAJ) with 1♦. 1♣ was opened on 22.7 % of all deals, just slightly ahead of 1♦ on 21.31%. So, the opening bid is 1 of a minor on almost half of all bridge deals!

Some questions with logical answers:

Which is more likely to be opened: 1♠ or 1♥? Logically, there is an equal chance of getting dealt 5 Spades or 5 Hearts. However, a 1♠ opener is more likely for two reasons:

1. With 5-5, you open 1♠ not 1♥.
2. Since some people use the Flannery convention (whereby a hand with five Hearts and four Spades is opened 2♦), that slightly cuts down on the number of 1♥ openers. The data bear this out, as 1♠ was opened roughly 7500 more times than 1♥ on the 1,000,000 deals.

Here's another question with a logical answer: Which is more likely – a 3-of-a-minor opening or a 3-of-a-major opening?

Since most people use 2♣ (and a few use 2♦) as conventional, there is no way to open weak two bids there. That puts more weight on the 3-bid. Conversely, most players can preempt on the 2-level with a major, so there should be fewer 3-level preempts in majors. Again, the data correlate. A 3-level preempt in a minor occurred on 37% more deals than a 3-of-a-major preempt.

For the curious-minded, here is the full report – there are even more logical conclusions that can be drawn.

Opening	% out of a million deals
1♣	22.68
1♦	21.31
1♥	15.54
1♠	16.31
1NT	11.68
2♣	2.02
2♦	1.32
2♥	2.02
2♠	2.05
2NT	1.85
3♣	0.69
3♦	0.68
3♥	0.52
3♠	0.47
3NT	0.10
4♣	0.04
4♦	0.05
4♥	0.32
4♠	0.27

## The Links



This was the turnout at face to face bridge at The Links on Saturday 29 April. Two Sections totalling 23 tables and this happened with many regulars still away at the SABF Congress in Cape Town!! If you have not returned yet to the home of Gauteng Bridge ( or have never been!), please come along. A great atmosphere, 24 boards to play with hand records and a personal if desired, and a wonderful tea with a variety of savoury and sweet things, all for R60. All standards of play welcome. Enquiries to Peta Feinstein on **083 228 3352**



## THE LOSING TRICK COUNT



*Researched by Deirdre Ingersent following a teatime conversation at The Links one recent Saturday afternoon. 'Top players talk about the losing trick count and I neither know what it is nor how to use it' So here goes . . .*

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On many deals evaluating your hand in terms of (Milton) points with the usual adjustments for long or short suits is all you need. When you have a fit, however, you may find it quicker and as accurate to use the losing trick count.

You count at most 3 losers in a suit and deduct losers for aces, kings and normally queens.

NO LOSERS: Void, A alone, A-K alone, A-K-Q to any length

ONE LOSER SUITS: Singleton K or lower, K-x or A-x, A-K-x, A-Q-x, K-Q-x

TWO LOSER SUITS: Q-x or worse, A-x-x, K-x-x, Q-J-x

You count Q-x-x as 3 losers unless you have an Ace elsewhere or partner has bid the suit.

HAND 1

Spades K 9 6 4

Hearts A 5

Diamonds K Q 10 2

Clubs 8 6 4

HAND 2

Spades J 9 6 4

Hearts Q

Diamonds A Q 9 5 2

Clubs 8 6 4

Hand 1 contains 7 losers: 2 in spades, 1 in hearts, 1 in diamonds and 3 in clubs.

Hand 2 contains 8 losers: 3 in spades, 1 in hearts, 1 in diamonds and 3 in clubs.

TYPICAL LOSER COUNTS for various bids are as follows:

Game forcing opening = 3 or fewer losers

Strong but not game forcing opening = 4 losers

Strong 1 level opening or jump shift response = 5 losers

Good 1 level opening or minimum jump shift = 6 losers

Minimum opening or game values as responder = 7 losers

2 level response or limit raise of an opening = 8 losers

1 level response or single raise of an opening = 9 losers

Now, to work out how many tricks the partnership can make, add your losers to partner's losers and deduct the answer from 24. So, if you have a spade fit and both have 7 loser hands, you can probably make game in spades ( $24 - 7 - 7 = 10$ )

On Hand 1 above, with its 7 losers, if partner opens 1 Spade you would expect to make 4 spades. Use your system to show a game forcing raise or make some forcing bid and then bid the 4 spades game next time.

On Hand 2, with its 8 losers, you would not be sure of bidding game if partner opens 1 Spade. You would just make a limit raise to 3 spades, inviting partner to go on to game with a 6 loser hand or pass with a 7 loser hand.

Please remember that the losing trick count ONLY works when you have a fit!  
So this is all you need to know, but my book expert says it is not always foolproof!



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## HELEN KRUGER

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*'Helen is a well known figure on the Gauteng bridge scene. She was one of the organisers of a highly successful Beginner School in the late 1990's and a driving force (with Pierre Du Toit and Julius Butkow) in establishing The Links as the home of Gauteng Bridge. She has been involved in the administration of bridge at high levels, Provincial and National and is currently the African Bridge Federation Secretary. She is one of South Africa's top lady players, has S A colours and tutors too. A most accomplished 'bridge' lady!'*

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2022 was an unbelievable bridge year for me.

It was the year for the incoming World Bridge Federation executive committee to be elected from 82 countries in the world for a 5 year cycle. The committee consists of 21 members.

There were 19 applications and only 3 would be voted in and to my astonishment I was one of those that was voted in. It was held at the AGM in Poland and was a very strictly monitored ballot.

But more than that, to my absolute astonishment the new president Jan Kameras when selecting his management committee, chose to include me.

This committee of 5 namely a president, 2 vice, a treasurer and me run the world bridge affairs, from planning championships, vetting new rules, handling problems in different countries, and there are quite a few of those.

We meet regularly in different countries, and the flow of emails is enormous.

I am the first South African to be included on the executive committee and it is really a great honour, but I have so much to learn, we don't realise in our small bridge community what really goes on in the bridge politics which has to be handled very delicately in some instances.

*Helen Kruger*

## Defense

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	1♠	2♦
4♠	Dbl	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

**E East: YOU**

**S South: Dummy**

**6♣ North**      **NS 0 EW 0**

Hand 1 (North): J75K87AQJ3295  
 Hand 2 (South): 8632Q327AKJ62

You lead the SA, and it holds.

Trick 1:              SA              S7              S4              S6

## QUIZ: Your continuation?

## SID QUIZZ

**Solution:** Another spade will yield a ruff/sluff, and a heart allows the queen (and the contract) to be made. Be passive here – return a diamond or trump – and wait for your heart trick. Nothing fancy here, just plain common sense.

Bd: 4

Dlr: West

Vul: Both

North  
 S 6  
 H A965  
 D Q74  
 C AKQ104

West  
 S K109854  
 H J104  
 D 1083  
 C 9

East  
 S AQJ32  
 H K87  
 D 95  
 C J75

South  
 S 7  
 H Q32  
 D AKJ62  
 C 8632

## Open Room:

West	North	East	South
McGANN	CULLIN	HANLON	P BERTH

Pass	1C	1S	2D
4S	Dbl	Pass	6C
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Trick 1:	SA	S7	S4	S6
Trick 2:	D5	D2	DT	DQ
Trick 3:	CA	C5	C2	C9
Trick 4:	CK	C7	C3	S5
Trick 5:	CQ	CJ	C6	S8
Trick 6:	D4	D9	DA	D3
Trick 7:	DK	D8	D7	S3
Trick 8:	DJ	S9	H5	S2
Trick 9:	D6	ST	H6	H7
Trick 10:	H2	HT	HA	H8

11 Tricks Claimed -100.

Push Board.

## Closed Room:

West	North	East	South
SYLVAN	GARVEY	WRANG	CARROLL

Pass	2C	Pass	2D
Pass	2H	Pass	2NT
Pass	3D	Pass	4C
Pass	4H	Pass	4S
Pass	4NT	Pass	5C
Pass	6C	Pass	Pass

Trick 1:	SA	S7	S5	S6
Trick 2:	D9	DA	DT	D4
Trick 3:	C2	C9	CA	C5
Trick 4:	CK	C7	C3	S4
Trick 5:	CQ	CJ	C6	S8
Trick 6:	CT	S3	C8	S9
Trick 7:	C4	S2	H2	ST
Trick 8:	DQ	D5	D2	D3
Trick 9:	D7	SQ	DK	D8
Trick 10:	DJ			

11 Tricks Claimed -100.

The hand below raised some interesting points in the bidding and play, when it arose in a Teams event.

**South dealer, EW vul**

**NORTH**

♠ J98

♥ AQ64

♦ A1084

♣ 84

**WEST**

♠ K52

♥ K1097532

♦ -

♣ J109

**EAST**

♠ A3

♥ -

♦ KJ953

♣ AKQ753

**SOUTH**

♠ Q10764

♥ J8

♦ Q762

♣ 62

West	North	East	South	
3H	P	4H	P	Opening lead: DA
			All pass	

Not everyone would open 3H when vulnerable, the more so in 2nd seat after a pass (Put the jack of hearts in there and it would be clear cut). However, it's not the worst pre-empt I've ever seen, and the diamond void is rather attractive. East made a well-judged raise to 4H. To average players, the idea of raising with a void may seem crazy, but as a vulnerable pre-emptor is supposed to have a pretty good suit, going for the major suit game may well be better than 3NT, for two reasons. Firstly, a spade lead may set up too many tricks for the defence, and secondly there is no guarantee that the clubs will run.

The opening lead of the ace of diamonds once again showed how leading unsupported aces, in general, is losing bridge. Admittedly against pre-empts it can be more tempting, but a club or spade looks better. At other tables, when the hand was replayed, the 8 of spades lead sank the contract. But at one table declarer was given a chance, and he took it well.

He ruffed the lead and exited with the seven of hearts, which South won with the eight. A spade came back, but declarer was under no pressure, as he could discard his losing spade later on the king of diamonds. All he had to do was get the trump suit right for just three losers. If hearts were 3-3 anything would do, but what about the 4-2 breaks? If either defender had AQJx then nothing would help, so he had to consider a doubleton honour in either hand. With three honours missing, A-Q-J, the chances of a defender having started with Qx or Jx, as opposed to Ax, was twice as likely. Accordingly, declarer lead the king of hearts, which smothered the jack, losing only three trump tricks in the process. Dummy won the spade return, discarded his losing spade on the king of diamonds, and ruffed a diamond to continue with the nine of hearts, forcing out the queen. He won the club return in hand and drew the last trump with the ten, notching up a well earned ten tricks.

# DARLING DAISY'S TIPS FOR BEGINNERS!

## 1. BIDDING TO YOUR TRUMP NUMBER

I think this is a useful tip for new bridge players who are often unsure how far to bid in an auction. We all know that trumps take tricks and the more your partnership has the fewer the opponents will hold. In simple terms this means you can afford to bid higher when you have a good trump fit. The usual rule is that with an 8 card fit you can contract for 8 tricks ( a two level contract e.g. with 8 spades held between you a 2 spades contract is right), with a 9 card fit you contract for 9 tricks etc.

Spades K 9 4  
Hearts Q J 6 2  
Diamonds 7 3  
Clubs J 8 6 3

If an opponent opens 1 Club or 1 Diamond and partner overcalls 1 Spade, you should raise to 2 Spades - you can envisage 8 trumps. If instead, partner overcalls 1 Heart, you can see a 9 card fit and so make a jump raise to 3 Hearts. And here is a good tip.

Spades K 9 6 4 2  
Hearts A 6  
Diamonds K J 8 7  
Clubs J 6

If you open 1 Spade, the next hand overcalls 2 Clubs, partner bids 2 Spades and the next hand bids 3 Clubs, you should pass. Since partner may have only 3 spades, you may well have only 8 between you. Partner, if holding 4 spades, should be the one to compete to 3 Spades.

## 2. DON'T UNDERLEAD AN ACE!

At trick one in a suit contract, you should not underlead an ace (nor should you lead an ace because the role of an ace is to capture honours, not low cards). One risk in underleading an ace is that declarer may have a King in one hand and a singleton in the other, in which case the ace never makes.

A 10 7 3	Q 9 4	J 5 2
	K 8 6	

Leading from a suit with the ace can also give away a trick if declarer has honours in each hand. In the lay-out above, if you lead this suit, the King and Queen both make for declarer.

A 7 5 3	Q 9 4	K 10 8 2
	J 6	

In this example above, underleading an ace may also confuse partner. If you lead the 3 and dummy plays low, East will naturally finesse the 8 thinking you hold the J and declarer the Ace rather than the other way around. Then declarer loses only one heart trick instead of two.

## 3. SUPPORT PARTNER'S SUIT

Supporting partner's suit when you have support is one of the most important rules of bidding. One of the key aims in the bidding is to find a playable trump suit and, when you find one, tell partner this good news! Supporting partner's suit when the suit is a major is especially important as it is extremely likely you will want to play in that suit.

Spades A Q 7 4 2  
Hearts K 9 4  
Diamonds Q J 6 2  
Clubs 6

You open 1 Spade. If partner responds 2 diamonds, you raise to 3 diamonds, showing the support. If partner responds 2 hearts, again you raise to 3 hearts. This is correct as the 2 heart response shows a 5 card ( or longer) heart suit.

The general rule is that if partner has shown 5 cards in a suit you can raise with 3 and that if partner has shown 4 cards in a suit you can raise with 4. If partner has made a bid that is likely to show a 5 card suit (but not guaranteed it), it is usually fine to make a single raise with 3 card support. However you should NOT make a jump raise with only 3 card support if partner might have only 4 cards in the suit.

## Declarer Play

For a change, I will give you a 6-card double-dummy curio. You may look at all 4 hands, but you must assume best defense. OK?

**QUIZ:** Trumps are hearts. East to play and East-West to make 4 tricks.

**Solution:** HK first, then ruff the S10 and ruff a club. Now throw South in with a trump. He has to give you a diamond at the end. Contract made!

Both expert declarers went down - 'twas a tough one, yes.

Bd: 2  
Dlr: East  
Vul: NS

North  
S A75  
H J2  
D J32  
C QJ873

West  
S 63  
H 10853  
D A4  
C 109542

East  
S KQ104  
H AK96  
D Q987  
C A

South  
S J982  
H Q74  
D K1065  
C K6

Open Room:

West	North	East	South
McGANN	CULLIN	HANLON	P BERTH
1D	Pass	1C	Pass
2H	Pass	1H	Pass
Pass	Pass	4H	Pass

Trick	West	North	East	South
1:	S8	S3	SA	S4
2:	H2	HA	H4	H3
3:	D9	D5	DA	D2
4:	S6	S7	SK	S2
5:	SQ	S9	D4	S5
6:	D8	D6	H5	D3
7:	C2	C8	CA	C6
8:	<b>D7</b>	<b>DT</b>	<b>H8</b>	<b>DJ</b>
9:	C4	C3	H6	CK
10:	DQ	DK	HT	HJ
11:	CQ			

9 Tricks Claimed -50.  
Push Board.

Closed Room:

West	North	East	South
SYLVAN	GARVEY	WRANG	CARROLL
1H	Pass	1D	Pass
4H	Pass	2S	Pass

Trick	West	North	East	South
1:	CJ	CA	C6	C5
2:	D7	D5	DA	D3
3:	D4	D2	D8	DT
4:	CK	C2	C3	H6
5:	SK	S2	S6	SA
6:	S7	SQ	S8	S3
7:	HA	H4	H3	H2
8:	HK	H7	H5	HJ
9:	D9	D6	H8	DJ
10:	C9	CQ	H9	S9
11:	S4	SJ	HT	S5
12:	CT	C7		

9 Tricks Claimed -50.