

From the Chair

I am writing this on a particularly cold winter's morning (although the sun is shining down from a clear blue sky there is a chilly wind), thinking that all us devotees of bridge are not dependent on the weather for our regular fix! I hope everyone is doing well healthwise and have not succumbed to the flu viruses which appear to be circulating. If you are one of our GBU members in the pyjama club playing at home with your device, now is the time to get dressed and enter our **GBU Mini Congress**. More details appear later on in the Newsletter so couch potatoes this is the opportunity to show yourselves! We are hoping for a bumper entry so do not disappoint!

As always I have been reading various bridge books looking for ideas for articles which might appeal to our readers and thought this little article by Randy Baron was worth mentioning. He lists some common reasons why people play bridge and then says if you take a few minutes to consider why you play and what your personal motivation is, it will help you to learn a little more about yourself.

There are 15 reasons listed:

1. Ego gratification 2. Competition 3. Winning 4. Having fun 5. Learning a new skill 6. Solving problems 7. Interacting with people 8. Helping our memory as we age 9. Finding someone to have a relationship with or date 10. Making contacts for your business 11. Because your spouse/significant other wants to play 12. Because your spouse/significant other doesn't want to play (so it's a good excuse to have a little time away from each other) 13. To earn money as a tournament director, author, bridge club owner, professional, selling bridge items or tutor. 14. It's inexpensive entertainment 15. It's become a habit

Now I am sure you all know I am retired and not married, so that rules out 4 of this list but all of the other reasons would apply to me! I found that very interesting!

Two other topics which I will save for a future Newsletter are the importance of physical fitness and stamina, and that one key word concentration. I have a partner who concentrates extremely well always, even when feeling very tired. It would appear the vast majority of bridge authors (and there are plenty of them!) state "Concentration at the table is the number one ingredient to playing well".

Enjoyment is important too!

Yours in bridge,
Deirdre Ingersent

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WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

MARRAKESH HERE WE COME!



Photo: Miltiadis Fragkidis-unsplash

MANY CONGRATULATIONS to all Gauteng players who contested the recent **ZONALS EVENT** (organised online as RealBridge so all the participants gathered daily with their laptops and tablets at The Links), the separate categories taking about 2 weeks to complete. As always the GBU thanks Robert Stephens, Peta Feinstein and the staff there for their help. James Grant set up the roster of monitors and many thanks to all our volunteers for giving up their time to oversee the players.

This has been one of South Africa's most successful years with no fewer than 3 South African teams qualifying! A wonderful achievement!

In the OPEN category who will contest the **BERMUDA BOWL** Gauteng have 5 representatives! **Robert Stephens and Bernard Donde, Neville Eber and Hennie Fick, Craig Gower** and, recently departed to the Cape, **Alon Apteker**. This is a strong team and we hope they will do well.

In the LADIES category who will play in the VENICE CUP Gauteng have 4 players. **Roz Bernstein and Sharon Lang with Nicky Bateman and Tas Nestoridis**. Congratulations and Good Luck!

In the SENIORS event **James Grant and Larry Chemaly** are the Gauteng representatives. We wish them too all the best for their event.

May the South African flag fly high!

Submitted by Deirdre Ingersent

Lex is a well known and popular player on the Gauteng scene and plays both live bridge and bbo events. He has been involved with bridge admin for many years and is currently involved with The Links.

I've been immensely privileged to have played, as a pupil, with Craig and Rob in a few major international open championships. Many awesome moments, such as suddenly finding yourself on the same side of the screen as the charming Zia Mahmood. Luckily the shaking stops after a few minutes....

Also amusing moments. Defending against a 3NT contract, Rob led the JH. Declarer turned to me and asked about our leads. Standard, I replied. The JH held and then Rob proceeded to play, in order, QH, KH and AH. Declarer turned to me again and said with a wry smile: yes, I see, 4th highest.

I am also fortunate to have four regular and wonderful partners. There is therefore no shortage of lively debates on system....

Rob and I have done analyses of systems and conventions after our tournaments of 300+ boards. The low incidence of conventions was a surprise:

- Arising frequently, and successfully, were 11 (even 10) hcp openings, 14 hcp 1NT openings, weak 2's and 3's, Stayman, Hamilton, all four transfers, extending pre-empts, weak jump responses, check-back, support double, RKCB
- Less frequently: Jacoby 2NT, Lebensohl, cue-bid raises, Michaels, weak jump overcalls
- Coming up once or twice per tournament only: 1m-2NT over interference, quantitative 4NT, breaking transfers, XX responses, Drury, unusual 2NT, reverse bids, Hamilton over oppo 1NT overcall, puppet response to 2NT, garbage Stayman, scrambling 2NT, a 3-card major support rebid, trial bid, K ask, cue bid response over Ghestem/Michaels, responsive X, inverted minors.

As Craig and Rob advocate, better results do not come from sophisticated systems, but from counting, visualization, relentless concentration, more competitive bidding, reducing error rates, and, again, counting.

What basic systems do the top players play? Ninety percent play 2/1, upside down carding, Hamilton, Michaels.

Systems such as DON'T, Cappelletti, Ghestem, Lavinthal were notably absent.

THURSDAY MORNING SUPERVISED BRIDGE AT THE LINKS



This has been the most exciting bridge initiative since the end of Covid, and an undoubted success story! The idea of Peta Feinstein to hold classes for all categories of player from those who had just learned the game to those who had played for years but wanted to improve their play and get better results has just taken off!

It happens at **The Links** on a Thursday morning from 10am. It costs R50 and one just turns up, either with a partner or alone. Players are seated at tables and 12 prepared boards are given to each table. The 4 then play the hand and a tutor will advise at the table about the bidding, play and lead and answer any questions. Neville Eber sometimes gives a short talk pertaining to the boards. Rob Stephens and Bernard Donde are regular tutors. And other good standard players too.

From relatively small numbers at the start, there are now often 18 tables, once 20 tables even. Two Benoni ladies who attended had nothing but praise for this organised bridge tutoring session as they call it!

Photo by Lex Van Vught

Words by Deirdre Ingersent

Saturday Afternoon at The Links!



3 Sections, each
with 10 tables,
and Rob Stephens
overseeing
everything!

Come along and see what
fun it is to play face to face
bridge again! Just turn up
with your partner . . .



In Defence of the Defence (Finale) - James Grant

At last we arrive at the article I intended to publish initially, but realizing that on its own it would appear rather drab and dreary and of little or no interest to most or all of you, I have preceded it with observations on defence that might prove more useful.

If I were a professional bridge player apart from playing bridge every day, pouring over new conventions, writing bridge books, intimidating opponents at the bridge table and putting it about that I'm a better player than I really am – wait a minute, I'm already doing most of these things – I would be having a serious talk with my partner about using Suit Preference Advanced Signalling Methods or SPASM for short. I was going to call them Special Transactions Underlying Preferences In Defence but I thought that would be stupid.

Let's start with a simple concept. Let's assume you have in a given suit the 8,5 and 2

You don't have to be a mathematician to know that there are 6 different sequences in which you can play these cards

The 8 followed by the 5 followed by the 2

The 8 followed by the 2 followed by the 5

The 5 followed by the 8 followed by the 2

The 5 followed by the 2 followed by the 8

The 2 followed by the 8 followed by the 5

The 2 followed by the 5 followed by the 8

The fact of the matter is that nearly all of the time we will play them in the last sequence only because that's how we were taught to play them all those years ago when we were learning to play bridge and we've been doing that ever since for thousands of hands so it's imprinted in our mind and the only time we might deviate from this pattern is if we want to show count, or suit preference, or interest (or lack of it), or any one of the occasions I have described in earlier articles on this subject.

Forget all of that for the moment and let's assign meanings to these different sequences

8-5-2 I hold the ace or king in the higher suit

8-2-5 I hold the queen in the higher suit

5-8-2 I hold the ace or king in the lower suit

5-2-8 I hold the queen in the lower suit

2-8-5 Let's have a drink after the match

Now let's look at a hand

South opens 1S, North makes a Bergen bid of 3D showing a good raise to the 3 level with spades, South signs off in 3 but North now pushes on to 4S

You lead your ♠A and when dummy goes down you continue with a spade everyone following

North

♠ K742

♥ 85

♦ 1096

♣ AK104

West

♠ A3

♥ K1093

♦ KQ42

♣ 65

Declarer wins the second spade in hand, plays the ♣2 to the ace, then a small club to his queen followed by the ♣3 to the king, you discard a heart on this trick. He now leads a small diamond from dummy, partner follows low and South plays the ♦J from his hand. You win this trick, now plan your defence. Let's be honest, you haven't really been giving much thought to the defence apart from working out that it was safe to throw a heart on the third round of clubs. You certainly weren't watching what cards partner played earlier apart from deducing that he started with ♣Jxxx. But if you were a professional player you would be playing some form of SPASM and would have noted that he played the ♣8 followed by the ♣9 followed by the ♣7 indicating he held the ace or king of diamonds.

Most of us would have exited with a heart in this position on the basis that declarer surely holds the ♦A for this line of play. Here is the full hand

North

♠ K742

♥ 85

♦ 1096

♣ AK104

West

♠ A2

♥ K1093

♦ KQ82

♣ 65

East

♠ 63

♥ J642

♦ A854

♣ J987

South

♠ QJ1098

♥ AQ7

♦ J3

♣ Q32

In fact this form of signaling may be used whenever the card holding in any 3 or longer suit is known.

You open 1H, South bids 1S, partner bids 2H and the opponents end up in a spade contract

Partner leads the ♥2

North

♠ QJ
♥ A975
♦ QJ7
♣ A983

East

♠ 6
♥ KQ1083
♦ AK108
♣ 762

South wins the first trick with the ♥ A and whatever card South follows with both you and your partner know exactly each other's pip holding in this suit. Put this to good use and use 3 cards of your choice K,Q and 3 for example as SPASM signals the other cards in the suit indicating a passive defence.

North

♠ K1072
♥ Q106
♦ 1087
♣ AK

East

♠ 963
♥ AKJ4
♦ 9632
♣ 62

Opponents are playing in a spade contract, you and your partner having passed throughout. Partner leads ♣Q. Declarer wins this trick and proceeds to draw 3 rounds of trumps. Use the trump suit to strongly encourage a heart switch should your partner be able to regain the lead.

So there you have it, do my partner and I use these signals? Dream on, we're still struggling to remember all the other signals we are supposed to be using, but if I played bridge professionally? And remember, if when kibitzing these top players you see anything resembling the above, you read it here first!

James Grant

When you are dummy, be the best dummy you can be!

I started researching this when two separate events occurred recently at my local club. Both on the same afternoon! The first was an opponent straightening up dummy's cards and the second was dummy leading declarer by pointing to a card to be put out next!

What a good dummy does!

1. When you spread the dummy, put down the suit that was led by the opponents last. This is a subtle way to ensure that declarer does not play from dummy until he studies the whole hand. It is important that declarer does not set off without planning his whole hand strategy.
2. Space the cards neatly so the other three players can see all 13 cards in the dummy clearly, with the suits alternated by colour.
3. Make sure you are aware which hand declarer should be leading from and alert him if you think he is about to lead from the wrong hand.
4. Make sure he follows suit. Ask "No spades partner?" to ensure he is void in a suit when he ruffs in his hand. This avoids a revoke.
5. Dummy should keep track of each trick accurately so when the play is over he knows the exact result of the hand. The cards should be arranged in order as they are played, tricks lost lying down and those won standing up.
6. At the end of the hand but not before, dummy may draw attention to any errors in play e.g. a revoke or if someone has violated a law during play.
7. Dummy may give information in the tournament director's presence as to the facts of what occurred at the table.

What a dummy is never allowed to do!

1. Dummy may not initiate a call for the tournament director during play.
2. Dummy may not call attention to an irregularity during play.
3. Dummy must not participate in the play or communicate about the play to declarer.
4. Dummy may not exchange hands with declarer or leave his seat to watch declarer's play of the hand.
5. Dummy may not look at the face of a card in either defender's hand and a defender is not allowed to show dummy his hand.

There are penalties for any violation of these laws.

So players now you know!

Submitted by Deirdre Ingersent



'The local bridge community are very pleased to see that Sid Ismail has recovered sufficiently to TD at the recent Zonals Event (RealBridge online event) and came to visit us at Benoni Northerns last week where he said he should be playing with us live at our club on Thursday 15 June. He looks well in himself although at present using a walker. We wish him everything of the best and trust that his recovery will continue without any hitches



Bridge Quiz...

by Sid Ismail

You will be declarer in our problem today. Here are your hands and the bidding –

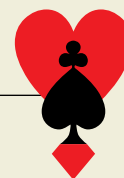
N	sandgold12
♠	A9
♥	Q93
♦	J9742
♣	A97
S	Ingrid 123
♠	KJ108542
♥	6
♦	8
♣	K854

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	2♥	2♠
4♥	4♠	P	P
X	P	P	P

West leads the ♦K, ♥K and follows it up with a small diamond to the ace which you ruff.

You draw trumps by playing small to the ace and West drops the queen on it!

QUIZ: How do you continue?



Duncan Craggs

'Duncan is an up and coming GBU member who is passionate about his bridge! Being younger, he still works, but plays face to face regularly on Saturday afternoons at The Links and plays as many competitions as he can, both live and online! A name to watch for the future!'

When Deirdre asked me to write an article for the GBU Bridge Newsletter I was quite flattered, and at the same time rather nervous, as what could little old me contribute? Surely coaching is best left to the real bridge players, and so I've decided to lean more towards the telling of a story, after-all I do like a good story myself sometimes.

So it is the Bermuda Bowl, way back in the day, but truth be told, this story would still be 100% accurate in the modern day game too - And along come this little hand :-

All Vulnerable

Dealer - South

North

♠ 9 6 4

♥ K Q 10 5

♦ A 5

♣ K Q 10 3

West

♠ A Q 8 7 2

♥ 7 6 3

♦ 8 7 3

♣ 9 4

East

♠ K 3

♥ 9 8 4

♦ 10 6 4 2

♣ 8 7 6 5

South

♠ J 10 5

♥ A J 2

♦ K Q J 9

♣ A J 2

It is important to set the scene. It's well into the day, we aren't too far away from play ending and many a team will be getting off their chairs never to return the next morning. So the bidding is going to be a little aggressive, big swings have to be found, if there is any hope of staying in the competition.

So the author who presents things does not fully explain the bidding at each and every table, all you get told is that the board is played 12 times. In all 12 examples it is SOUTH who is declarer, and in all examples, plays in NT's. We are also told that at all 12 tables E & W never enter the bidding, not even with a lead preference double.

6x South's play 3NT's

1x South plays 4NT's

and the remaining 5 times . . . (yip you guessed it), the board gets played in 6NT's. *(As said before the bidding was going to be a bit aggressive).*

So this is where the fun begins.



All of the 7 boards being played in game, go 1 down, and 2 down in the case of the pair in 4NT's - But "ALL" those who are in a small slam, "MAKE IT".

(And people say that bridge is boring) !!

You of course in a standard game contract are more than likely going to see West get things started with a spade opening lead. And as the card lies 5x tricks will roll in immediately. But in a small slam, leading away from an A - Q is more than likely the worst possible start ever. It is extremely unlikely to expect your partner to hold the missing King of Spades and if you are lucky enough to find this card in the hand of declarer, (a reasonably likely possibility), then 6NT's has a fair possibility of being defeat if (as West) you are just hold back and wait for spades to get played by declarer, with odds leaning in your favour that indeed he'd very likely have to dp so at some stage. Plus let's not forget West hold 6 HCP's you are not going to expect partner to be coming up with a further three, not with the opp.'s in 6NT's.

As you can see there are 12 tricks off the top, if WEST doesn't start with Spades.

Crazy game, this game we all love so much, and leaves me to quote S.A.'s finest, "Never say never", not so Mr. Gower.

Author : Duncan Craggs



Please support this GBU MINI CONGRESS. The first we have staged in a few years.

It is Joel Harris's first event in his role as Events Co-ordinator and he has gone to a lot of trouble to organise exciting prizes.

The **TEAMS EVENT** will be over 3 sessions Friday afternoon **July 7th** and all day Saturday **July 8th**.

This will be used as the Medwin / Berkowitz Trials too. Format will be dependent on entries but all Teams will play all 3 sessions.

Please be advised that although light refreshments will be available each session **NO LUNCH** will be served on the Saturday. Players must make their own arrangements.

The **PAIRS EVENT** on Sunday **July 9th** will be a spectacular gala occasion, a full day of bridge with morning and afternoon teas and a **FULL LUNCH** provided. The format will be similar to our past full day events, random seating but pairs graded. Joel has promised more prizes than ever! Not just for the various Section winners.

All GBU members are very welcome!

Come join in this live bridge fun!

SEE YOU THERE . . .

But don't forget to enter online!

[HERE](#)



YOU ARE INVITED!

GBU PRESENTS

MINI CONGRESS

OPEN TEAMS EVENT = R90 PER PERSON PER SESSION

- 1st Session - Friday 7th July 2023
Start at 13:30
- 2nd Session - Saturday 8th July 2023
Start at 09:30
- 3rd Session - Saturday 8th July 2023
Start at 14:00

R295 Per Person OPEN PAIRS EVENT

- 2 Sessions - Sunday 9th July 2023
Whole day starts at 09:30 Sharp!

Delicious Lunch Served
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Nedbank a/c 1756013144.

Reference your name

Many Prizes to be won

THE LINKS IN LINKSFIELD

Contact Deirdre For More Information 082 430 4140

Or Contact Joel For More Information 082 926 0287

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 7-9 July 2023

Once the ♠Q drops, we find ourselves lucky to have an extra entry into dummy in the form of the trump 9. If the ♦Q drops in 3 or 4 our ♦J can be established. Then we don't have to rely on the clubs being 3-3. So, we ruff a diamond after the trump ace.

Surprise, surprise – East shows out! East discards a small heart on the 3rd diamond!

What do we now know about this hand now? West can be counted for 5 or 6 hearts, 5 diamonds and a singleton spade. He thus has 1 or 2 clubs - no more, right?

Can you see the way forward now?

We play the ♣4 from hand and West follows with the ♣3 and we insert the ♣9 knowing that it would lose. Sure enough East wins the ♣10 and plays a trump back. If he played a heart instead, we could have ruffed the last club with the ♠9, pity. All is not lost though.

We win the trump return with the 9 in dummy and we cash the ♠A. On this trick West drops the queen. West's distribution is therefore 1=5=5=2 and we close proceedings by enveloping East's clubs J-6 with our K-8. +590!

The hands:

<div>D</div> <div>16</div>	<div>N sandgold12</div> <div><div>♠ A9</div><div>♥ Q93</div><div>♦ J9742</div><div>♣ A97</div></div>	<div>W</div> <div>N</div> <div>E</div> <div>S</div> <div><div>1♥</div><div>4♥</div><div>X</div></div> <div><div>P</div><div>4♠</div><div>P</div></div> <div><div>2♥</div><div>P</div><div>P</div></div> <div><div>2♠</div><div>P</div><div>P</div></div>
<div>W ian_hdbc</div> <div><div>♠ Q</div><div>♥ AKJ82</div><div>♦ KQ1065</div><div>♣ Q3</div></div>		<div>E newmoon</div> <div><div>♠ 763</div><div>♥ 10754</div><div>♦ A3</div><div>♣ J1062</div></div>
	<div>S Ingrid 123</div> <div><div>♠ KJ108542</div><div>♥ 6</div><div>♦ 8</div><div>♣ K854</div></div>	<div>4♠x S</div> <div>NS: 0 EW: 0</div>

Defence is definitely the toughest part of bridge. Unlike declarer, who can see both his hand and dummy, as a defender you have to often make assumptions about what you need partner to have in order to beat a contract. This often requires good visualization.

North dealer, both vul

	NORTH	
	S K102	
	H J8	
	D AK10832	
	C 76	
WEST		EAST
S 9873		S QJ6
H 73		H AQ965
D J97		D 64
C AQ104		C J95
	SOUTH	
	S A54	
	H K1042	
	D Q5	
	C K832	

West	North	East	South
	1D	1H	3NT

All pass

Opening lead: H7

The bidding was pretty much the same at most tables – with a 1D opening bid and the 1H overcall. After the normal lead of the seven of hearts however, there were a number of different defences adopted.

Everyone took the first trick with the ace of hearts, and then a few woodenly returned a heart, giving the declarers an easy ride to nine quick tricks.

Some easts looked a little further and saw that with those long diamonds in the dummy, and with declarer sure to have hearts well stopped, that it was necessary to switch to a club immediately. The five of clubs was played, but the declarers played low, forcing the defenders at west to win with the ten. The king of clubs was now safe from attack, so ten tricks were made.

Two easts realized that it would be important to try to stay on lead in the club suit in order to continue the attack from their side, and found the thoughtful play of the jack of clubs. At table one, this was ducked all around, but when a club was continued, South playing low again, west had to win with the ten, and only one more club trick could be taken. At table two, west was alive to the situation and unblocked the ten of clubs under the jack. But when east continued with the nine, declarer covered, and suddenly the eight became a stopper.

And the winning defence? East must switch to the nine of clubs! Now west does not have to do any fancy unblocking and can follow with the four. East must then continue with the jack – if declarer covers, the defenders have their four club tricks. If not, then west plays the ten under the jack, and east is on lead to play clubs for a third time, through the king.

This fairly rare layout is in the books on suit play – where a player without a re-entry has to play the nine – so it's nice to see it come up at the table.

DARLING DAISY'S TIPS FOR BEGINNERS!

1. LEAD MAJORS NOT MINORS

As opening leader if it is unclear what suit to lead, you should generally prefer an unbid major to an unbid minor. The reason is if the opponents have the majors, they will tend to bid them in the hope of finding an 8 card fit.

West	North	East	South
			1 NT

Pass	3 NT	End	
------	------	-----	--

The logic is North surely does not have a 5 card major (no transfer or jump to 3 of a suit) and probably no 4 card major either (no Stayman used).

West	North	East	South
			1 D

Pass	3 D	Pass	3 NT
------	-----	------	------

End

North does not have a 4 card or 5 card major but could have length in clubs.

West	North	East	South
	1 D	Pass	1 NT

Pass	3 NT	End	
------	------	-----	--

South does not have a 4 card major and probably does not have 4 diamonds either. A speculative club lead is likely to hit South's main suit on this auction.

2. THE 1 NT RESPONSE

If partner opens the bidding with a suit higher ranking than your suit but you have too few values to respond at the 2 level, bid 1 NT. This keeps the bidding alive and gives partner a chance to show other features - extra values or a second suit e.g. You will not always have a balanced hand.

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3
S 6 4	S 6	S 6
H Q 9 7	H Q 9 7 3	H Q 9 7 6 3 2
D 9 8 6 2	D K 8 6 2	D K 8 6
C A 8 4 2	C A 8 4 2	C Q 8 4

On all of these hands, respond 1 NT to 1S.

With Hand 3, you plan to rebid 2 H if you get the chance.

3. A silly bit of True or False Nonsense!

1. A singleton in partner's suit is an asset.
2. Count signals are to tell your opponent how many cards in a suit you have.
3. Attitude signals refer to your opinion of an opponent.
4. When partner leads the King he promises the Queen.
5. All spot cards are equal.
6. When partner leads a small card, your play of the Queen denies the Jack in your hand.
7. A reverse bid means going backwards in the bidding.
8. A jump shift is when you skip a level and change suit.

(In case you didn't get it, all odd statements are false, even ones true!)