



Clarence Gardens Bridge Centre

Newsletter November 2025



The Director Plays a Hand.

Today I was called to the table after an opening lead out of turn from North. The contract was 6♥ and East, who should have been declarer had started to put her cards down. The rules are quite clear on this – the opening lead must be accepted and partner is now declarer.

So, all of East's cards came down, declarer saw what she was up against and had a panic attack, so the players asked that I should play the hand on her behalf.

Cont. 6♥ West

♠J10653

♥K6542

♦J10

♣Q

♠K2

♥Q83

♦Q92

♣AK986

♠A

♥A1097

♦AK76543

♣J

♠Q9874

♥J

♦8

♣1075432

The ♣Queen opening lead was won by my Ace, heart to dummy's Ace, Jack falling, another heart lead, won by North who continued with a spade.

I won dummy's Ace and played on diamonds until North ruffed, then claimed the rest for one down. This wasn't a good result, 6♦ making easily, however by careful play I had managed to get eleven tricks.

I thought further about the hand on the way home and it then occurred to me that I could have made my contract, regardless of the opening lead. All I had to do was to lead the ♥Queen from hand at trick two, pinning south's ♥Jack, and unblocking dummy's 10 if it isn't covered. Next lead the ♥8 from hand, finessing again, finally a third heart to dummy's nine, cash the trump Ace and play on diamonds, then play on the diamonds, conceding just the one trump trick.

The contract can also be made on a spade lead, seemingly knocking out dummy's re-entry by taking just two rounds of trumps – I'll leave you, the reader, to work out why.

Quiz Night

A good time was had by all at the Quiz night on Saturday evening November 25th, with more than \$2,100 raised. Special thanks need to go to Daniel Richardson of OC Real Estate for his donation of \$500, Mitcham Council for their gift of \$450, and Nola Stone, the convenor, and her willing workers and donors. We also need to mention the Bowls club who didn't charge us for the use of their premises.

The money raised will help fund our end of session barbecues and pizzas.

Elementary My Dear Watson

Watson: "I say Holmes, how is it that you always do better than me at this Bridge game? I have played far more cards than you, yet you always outscore me."

Holmes: "Contract Bridge is a logical game. I perceive and then act on the clues that abound whereas you, I'm afraid, tend to blunder your way through regardless of all the evidence that surrounds you. Take as an example this hand from last Wednesday, when at our separate tables we each reached a contract of two clubs by South after the same auction".

Dealer: West ♠ QJ94

Nil vul. ♥ Q973

♦ A97

♣ A10

♠ 5

♥ A84

♦ K1082

♣ J8765

W	N	E	S
1 ♦	X	1NT	2 ♣

All pass

Opening lead of a small diamond, small from dummy, Queen from East, South wins the King.

"The opponents were playing a strong No Trump natural system. What can you tell me about their hands?".

Watson: "Well, West has an opening hand, whilst East has about six to nine points".

Holmes: "Anything else?".

Watson: "Well, East has denied a four card major, but then they do have eight spades between them."

Holmes: "A sign of intelligence at last! Let's see what we really know about their hands. First spades must be divided four-four - while East has neglected to bid a four-card major, he would certainly have bid the suit having five of them. We can assume that West does not have five spades from the opening call."

"We now know that West has at least four diamonds, and a four-card spade suit. East would have doubled our contract if he held five trumps, so West has at least two clubs. Further, while East may suppress one four card major for his 1NT response, but not two, so it is most likely that West had a 4-3-4-2 distribution, whilst East was dealt a 4-3-2-4."

Watson: "Very impressive. However, I am not sure how this is going to help me."

Holmes: "I hadn't finished. The opening lead also gave a clue of its own, because it told us that West did not have the Ace and King of spades. Therefore, we can now place the honour cards with a fair degree of certainty. East has the Ace or King of spades, the played Queen of diamonds, and a trump honour - on the bidding West must have every other picture card, in particular the King of hearts."

Watson: "I see. How did you put all this information to effect."

Holmes: "I led a trump to dummy's 10, won by East's queen. East returned a diamond, won by dummy's 9, and the Ace of trumps dropped West's king, as I expected. Then I came back to hand with the Ace of hearts, took my jack of trumps. The defence eventually took one spade trick, one heart, one diamond, and two clubs, so I made my contract".

Watson: "Amazing deduction, Holmes".

Holmes: "Elementary, my dear Watson."

Recent Masterpoint Promotions

Fiona Butler	Regional (50 mps)
Janice Hegarty	Bronze National (more than 200, including 100 red)
Christine Niemann	Regional (50 mps)
Trevor Parr	Silver Local (25 mps)
Jackie Watkins	Bronze Regional (100 mps)

Committee News

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday February 15th, lunch and a free game afterwards provided.

I shall be retiring from the position of club president, whilst Moira Smith will not be continuing as club secretary.

2025 Christmas Lunch
Warradale hotel
12:00 for 12:30, December 7th
Prior bookings to Stuart Tuck
Pay on the day

How do you bid this hand?

West the dealer, all vulnerable, from the Loxton Teams Congress.

♠K1063	
♥Q109	
♦62	
♣10962	
♠QJ95	♠A84
♥AKJ5	♥82
♦-	♦AJ987543
♣AKQ73	♣-
♠72	
♥7643	
♦KQ10	
♣J854	

If you opened 2♣ on the West hand, go to the bottom of the class. It's a strong hand, however you need to find a fit and a 2♣ opening will just be a hindrance.

I saw a Mildura pair do just that and their auction proceeded as follows:

2♣	3♦
4♣	4♦
4NT*	5♥ (two key cards)

Pass

The 4NT call was a desperate attempt to find a suitable contract, 5♥ did well to make 10 tricks.

Most pairs got into trouble with this hand, with two nameless Clarence Gardens identities bidding diamond slams. They weren't alone, several other pairs also reaching hopeless six or even seven level contracts.

So, how should the auction go?

1♣	1♦
1♥	1♠ (fourth suit forcing, showing game values)
3♠	3NT

All pass

The 3♠ bid, while showing extra values, also tells partner that opener has at most a singleton diamond. So, knowing the hand is a total misfit, the cheapest game contract available becomes the order of the day.

Finally, one pair were particularly fortunate when they reached 6NT by East. Knowing that West had the other three suits South open led the ♦King, partner following with the two, holding the trick. Their agreement was that while they usually played low to encourage, the lead of a King asks for count, low being even. South continued that suit, declarer took the next seven diamond tricks, contract!

Let's Play 3NT

♠A72

♥3

♦J87432

♣AQ10

♠KQ54

♥AK2

♦K96

♣J98

Your contract is 3NT on the lead of the ♥5. Plan your play to maximise your chances. So, where are your nine tricks coming from? Your spades are good for three, perhaps four, two or three club tricks, two heart tricks and an unknown number of diamond tricks. Even if the club finesse works you are going to need a diamond trick, or the fourth spade.

It's a matter of timing. If you take the club finesse and it fails you will always go down, as several Thursday evening players found out. Instead you need to tackle the diamonds first by crossing to dummy's ♠Ace, and lead a diamond to your king.

The full deal:

♠A72

♥3

♦J87432

♣AQ10

♠J86

♥QJ754

♦Q

♣7653

♠1093

♥10986

♦A105

♣K42

♠KQ54

♥AK2

♦K96

♣J98

In practice your ♦K wins the trick, West's ♦Queen falling, leaving East with the A10 sitting over dummy's Jack. (If East had played the Ace then you would have had five diamond tricks!)

Your situation has now improved, since you have three red suit tricks, and need just six from the black suits. Now you take the club finesse, it loses, heart returned.

For once virtue and good play is rewarded – the spades divide evenly, and your contract makes.

OC Real Estate – Daniel Richardson

We are pleased to have had OC Real Estate as the major sponsor for our Quiz Night on Saturday, 25 Oct. Daniel Richardson is the local OC Property Consultant and Auctioneer, his number is 0424332564.

MASTER OF THE GAME by Colin Norton

I really like my opponents. Well, don't we all? But you know how it is, there's always one. Aggressive, arrogant, disdainful. You make a difficult four spades. He waves his hand and points out there was an easy overtrick. Bottom board! You bid five diamonds and go one off. You feel it coming - it was a straightforward three no trumps.

Bottom board! You cleverly stop at three spades. Why didn't you do the elementary thing and bid your hearts? Any good player would always make game in that suit. You guessed it. Bottom board again. His partner's come and go with amazing regularity, each in turn beaten then consigned to oblivion as just reward for their obvious incompetence and inadequacy.

Now I grant you he is a very fine player. I hate to say it but even a great player. Every system known in minute detail. Standard, Acol, Pachabo (whatever that might be) etc, etc. Master of them all. And conventions - you should just hear him. Extended this, extended that, multi twos, multi three's, cue bids, double cue bids and if they don't exist he spontaneously creates them, and anyway all the good ones he's improved upon or were invented following his suggestion.

By comparison, my partnership with Andrew Brettell (he of the well-known legs) does not suffer from these conventional restraints, instead being based on our respective enthusiasms at the time. Therefore, when I picked up a hand with 24 high card points, and partner first showed a positive response, then a balanced hand, there was no holding back.

Our opponents seemed mesmerised as we bid on like there was no tomorrow. Oh how we bid. Round and round we went, cuebidding our Aces, Kings, and then our Queens. Backwards and forwards, even higher, until, triumphantly, my partner proclaimed, seven spades!

Before the echoes of the bid had passed away a voice snarled loudly in my right ear.

"DOUBLE!"

Oh no. Not him. Please not him.

Had it been anyone else I'm sure I would have remained silent, But no. I had to be the smart Alec, my mouth overtook my brain, if not with the speed of light, certainly faster than the speeding bullet. (There are most who will tell you, I think perhaps a little unfairly, that this is not unusual).

I heard someone say "Redouble"! Who could it have been? For the first time ever I saw my "Bete Noir" look pleased.

I was now in that trance-like state when that whole of one's life flashes past. But perhaps not all was lost.

"Let's get on with it", snapped my tormentor.

The Jack of clubs appeared. My partner nonchalantly flared his cards on the table. The last club was barely in place when my opponent slapped his cards face-up on the table and snarled "Settle for one off and four hundred points! And if I may say so what a ridiculous bid!". For once I agreed with him.

♠Q2

♥K32

♦A9832

♣A32

Tormentor

♠ -

♠J10843

♥ 987654

♥J10

♦ -

♦107654

♣J1098764

♣5

Me

♠AK9765

♥AQ

♦KQJ

♣KQ

Oh partner! Life can be so cruel. Bridge is such a dreadful game. Still, I was brought up in the old school, taught to mind my manners.

"Thank you very much partner, very nice", and, turning toward my opponent "Thank you, but I think I would rather play the hand".

"And", I couldn't resist saying "you may pick up your cards, I won't call the director".

I looked further at the hand - the vision unfolded - a trump reduction play, ending with a trump coup. My play was like poetry itself as I calmly, correctly and gracefully took my thirteen tricks.

My tormentor was distraught at his public humiliation - there was acclaim and congratulations from all else, as I carefully explained that East could have defended better, but I would still have made my contract - all manner of top players were asking me to be their partner, but no, I would not forsake my Andrew (well, not yet, anyway).

Then I woke up. As is my custom I had fallen asleep after lunch. Where were the crowds, where was the applause? I went to the bathroom to freshen up, and there was the hand - it was on my T-shirt, a gift from a loving wife after seeing it advertised in a recent ABF newsletter.

Now, if only I could remember how I made that contract .

With apologies to William Noall who constructed the original problem called "The Wrecker".

This article first appeared in the SABA Newsletter in 1996.

Recent Placegetters

MONDAY OCTOBER PAIRS

- 1 John Neuling & Trevor Parr
- 2 Cynthia Brinkman & Graham Stucley
- 3 Genevieve Donnelly & Terry Healey

FRIDAY OCTOBER PAIRS

- 1 Jinny Fuss & Jackie Ward
- 2 Carmel & Norman Thompson
- 3 Mary Drikas & Phil Thomas

FRIDAY PINK OCTOBER PAIRS

- 1 Ken Stone & Peter Tuck
- 2 Janet Hegarty & Janice Paltridge
- 3 Veronica McCaffrey & Maja Reed

The Revoke Law

A revoke is only established when the offender, or the offender's partner, plays to the next trick. So, when a player having revoked then shows a card that should have been played, that act in itself doesn't mean that the trick penalty should be applied.

If neither the offender nor their partner haven't led to the next trick then the revoke should be corrected and, if the culprit was a defender, the card played in error becomes a penalty card, to be played at the first legal opportunity.

Whatever you may think, however always call the Director – it's what we pay them for!

Respect at the Bridge Table

In South Australian schools students are being encouraged to speak up when they witness bullying and to discourage negative behaviour. The same principle applies at our bridge tables.

We all make mistakes from time to time, especially when we're learning. If an experienced player chooses to comment on another's play, it is very important that their remarks are constructive, not critical. Negative or hurtful comments can easily be perceived as a form of bullying, even if that wasn't the intention.

If such a situation arises at your table, please gently encourage a more positive response. A kind word goes a long way in helping everyone feel welcome and supported.

And remember — we were all beginners once.

Thank you for helping keep our bridge club a friendly and respectful place for everyone.

Multi Twos

Recently I saw a club player pass as dealer holding ♠AJ982♥6♦6♣K109875
Such a hand, with its playing tricks potential, deserves a bid, and is part of the reason that I play multi twos, as follows:

2♣ 20+ balanced, or 18+hcp and at least 8 playing tricks in the primary suit.

2♦ A weak two in one of the majors, or 23+ balanced

2♥ Either both majors (my choice), or else 5+ hearts, 4+other, weak.

2♠ Five+ spades and a four+ card minor, weak

2NT – both minors, weak

Responses:

2♣, 2♦ is negative, other responses natural promising 7+ points with at least two controls (Ace = 2, King = 1), a suit call must be 5+ cards.

2♦ 2♥ and 2♠ are both correctible, 2NT inquiry as to which major and strength.

2♥ 2NT forcing enquiry, all other response to play.

2♠ 2NT asks for opener's other suit, all other responses to play.

2NT minor suit responses to play, major suit response forcing for a round.

State Wide Pairs

Monday 24th November

Red and gReen masteRpoints,
booklets provided at the end of the session