



Table Talk

A newsletter from the
Taupo Contract Bridge Club
– June 2014

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Winter has arrived with some good frosts that have 'browned off' many of our garden plants. We probably ought to be out there dead-heading but bridge is more fun! It has been good to see 10 tables at the Tuesday afternoon session though the night sessions have been lower in numbers: we know it takes an effort to go out at night in the winter months but there is good play to be had at the Club and too much TV is bad for us so we have been reliably informed (but don't ask me from whom!).

COMING UP:

The Mid-winter Bridge and Dinner is on Sunday the 22nd of June.

Come along with your favourite partner (does not have to be a member of the Club) **and enjoy an afternoon's bridge followed by a midwinter dinner organized by the club. This is always a very happy social occasion so book in on the club notice board list or ring Ralph on 3786526 . The cost is only \$10 per player and a cash bar will be available.**

Wednesday night sessions during June will feature a teams' competition for the Neil Marshall Trophy. Enter as a team of four **or just turn up on the night as a pair** and you will be included in a team – we have a spare pair available to ensure that we can make up teams for any who want to play, so come along and enter into some team spirit and rivalry! It's a good competition.

Recent happenings...

The PAKn'SAVE OpenTournament.

This three session event went very well under the direction of Martyn Oysten from Whanganui (Bridge NZ). He divided the field into two sections – an 11 table Mitchell Movement, and a 6 table Howell, both playing the same set of cards. By clever organization of twice in the Mitchell and once in the Howell section we met every other pair in the field so had the pleasure of playing against NZ Representatives Blair Fisher shortly off to play in China and Jenna Gibbons who is in the ladies team to play in Turkey later in the year. To occasional tournament participants like myself this was both an education and a check on the quality of one's own play. For the record when Garth Robinson and I played against Blair and his wife we scored just 15% while against Jenna we scored 69%. I don't think this tells us anything other than the we salvaged a little pride from the boards against Jenna after the slaughter when against Blair! It also told me (as if I needed reminding) that I am a child in arms against the giants in the game.

The official results are on the Club Website under Tournaments but suffice to say this year's winners were Ian Clayton (Hamilton) and Alan Turner (Tauranga) with runners up Alan Dick (Rotorua) and Don Nightingale (Wanganui): Blair and Elizabeth Fisher (Hamilton) came in 3rd. We were informed in the winners' speech that Ian has come to every Open Tournament here at our Club since 1976 - a remarkable record. Thanks Ian for such consistent support for an out-of-the way club like ours. Joan Berg and Rosemary Ritchie (14th/32) won the Trevor and Betty Watts Trophy awarded to the highest ranked Taupo Pair. While none of our local pairs finished in the main prize list it is heartening to note that Rosemary and Joan won a session prize in the Saturday afternoon Mitchell session while Garth and I (after being dead bottom in the afternoon!) were top in the Saturday evening Howell session.

The Club's hospitality for the weekend under the direction of Committee member Glenis McCarty was excellent: A big "thank you" to the stalwart band of helpers – Suzanne Flowers, Christina Gillett, Anne Hennebry, Claire Hooten, Barbara Horner, Lynn MacLeod and Mary Plummer gave great food and service to the players, including a two course lunch on the Sunday, and we are most grateful to many members who provided such classy fare for the drinks and nibbles break between the Saturday sessions. Glenis put it all together very well and as usual the club received great plaudits from the visitors – well done Glenis. Peggy Nisbet was the 'gofer' for the weekend and our barmen under Barry Fitzgerald ensured that all whose spirits needed bolstering were bolstered! Thanks to all members who responded so well to our last newsletter's plea for help behind the scenes in our tournaments and other social events. Our Open was a very satisfactory occasion and we extend our thanks to PAK'nSAVE for their continued very generous sponsorship of this event. *(If I have unwittingly omitted any special helper, please accept my apology – Ralph)*

PS: Garth and I ran into no poor behavior in the tournament – you know the sort of thing: rude remarks, obvious enjoyment of your muck up, anger between partners after a misunderstanding. Many of the visitors said how pleasant they find it to play in tournaments run by our Club. However to my shame I know only too well that it is so easy to criticize your partner or opponent hurtfully. Page 28 in our Club Programme booklet has the rules on Etiquette. We are meant to show courtesy and respect at all times however annoyed we may occasionally feel. What's more, as is said of an All Blacks' Tour 'what happens on the tour stays on the tour' – so what happens at the bridge table stays at the table and is not carried on elsewhere. A peace-making **"Sorry Partner for being a bit ratty and thanks for playing with me"** as we leave the table to go home should be enough to ease any friction raised during the play.

TCBC supports NZ Junior Bridge with Fundraiser

Treasurer Rona Driscoll organized this special vent to suport Junior Bridge in NZ, in particular the sending of Junior team overseas to represent the country at international level. 8 tables enjoyed a good selection of 26 interesting hands which were then scored across the country to find national winners of the event. None of our players featured in the honours list but on the night our winning scorers were Rona and John Driscoll (N/S) with 63% and Ulrich Biesenbach and Chris Jones (E/W) with 64%.



In the picture we see the young, the older and the in-betweens! Two of our junior players Jack and David are centre with some of the older members Jocelyn and Peggy share a drink together while back left Philip Martin is in serious planning with Chris Jones for the play ahead



Pouring a glass of wine seems rather a serious business to assistant barman Ralph – the anxious 'client' can remain anonymous.

We started with a pot-luck meal (delicious food brought along by the players) and then got on with the bridge and chattered afterwards while absorbing the scores. Ulrich's wife Anmari sent along some home-made soaps which were raffled which added to the entry fee of \$10 plus a very kind donation from Lizzie Buchanan who could not make the evening meant that over \$400 was sent on to NZ Bridge.

We received back a well designed thank you card which one of those selected for the Junior Team had designed – it can be seen on the notice Board. Especial thanks to our behind the scenes helpers – Imm Irvine, Kim Chung, Suzanne Flowers and Lauren Lehndorf in the kitchen and Barry Fitzgerald who attended to the drinks. Everyone agreed that it was a great night socially as well as bridgewise and contribution assisted in the national fundraiser to achieve over \$10,000 for the youth team travel fund. Be there for the next similar occasion!



Committee News:

The treasurer reports that we are keeping our heads above water financially with a slight increase in weekly table numbers and a successful result from the open tournament.

We have had a generous donation of plants for the front garden from Glenis McCarty's son-in-law Mark Aldridge of TERRAIN, for which many thanks. John Sunley continues to keep an eye on things botanical...

Property Committee member Owen Nelson has had a few locks and window catches etc to replace lately, and there is an ongoing problem with downpipes from the roof – we suspect from poor design in the original plumbing. We are very grateful to Owen for attending to these annoying little tasks which always take more time to fix than expected. We are having a few problems with the external lighting but will have an electrician on the job shortly to sort this out.

We are trying to finalise membership in time for the June NZB levy assessment – remember under the ClubRules if you have not paid your sub by the end of June you are no longer a member, so if you happen to have forgotten to pay your membership dues for this year (or are resigning from the club) please get in touch with our treasurer Rona Driscoll.

We welcome to the Club new members *Paddy Carl* (376 7134), *Robyn Evans* (377 2370), *Claire Hill* (376 8438), *Christine Knowles* (378 8684), *Marian Lourie* (378 3610), and *Ted Swanney* (377 1004). If you are lacking a partner consider ringing to invite one or other to partner you in a club session.

Lessons:

President David's learners classes are well underway – disappointingly with only two tables, but good progress is being made: the smaller number means each class members can feel they are getting personal tuition which should help them no end.

Rona Driscoll recently ran a *two- night Improvers class* with an average of 30 at each session. Entitled "Traffic Light Bidding" (devised in association her husband John) it aims to help players recognise when they should bid on (Green Light), when they should be enquiring (Amber) and when they should definitely NOT bid on (Red). This seems a useful approach for those relative new to the game. Many thanks Rona – the 'table money' from these classes comes to the club so there is benefit to both player and the club itself.

Editors Comment - The joys and fears of playing NO TRUMPS.

Many newcomers to bridge seem to think that the most important part of playing this great partnership game is the AUCTION – bidding for the right to be declarer. Now while it is completely true that the major difference between bridge and any other card game is that two players have to bid constructively together to find the par (best) contract for the hand so that they can get the highest score with their cards, it is the PLAY of the hand which in the end will crown their success

or bring them down to earth with a thud. Too much attention to theories on bidding while not learning **how to play the cards** will lead to many poor results at the bridge table. At home we will lose our cash by poor play (it is said that one of the best ways to improve our bridge is to play for more than we can afford to lose!) – at the Club we end up at the bottom of the results for the session but without monetary loss. The great advantage of playing at the club (if we want to improve) is that we are able to see from the score sheet (or by later looking up the results on the Club Website) what are the par contracts to be bid and just how many tricks CAN be won with proper play of the cards. There is actually far more satisfaction from getting the best out of the cards than from just winning.

I have found that playing NO TRUMP contracts is one of the best teachers for the *play* of the cards. I have noticed at the table that many newer players go into shock when faced with playing No Trumps: they feel more at ease in a Suit Contract because with a bit of luck they will have an ultimate stopper (by trumping) for the opposition's long suits. In No Trumps there is no *Joker* to rescue you – you have to succeed by careful planning! Success in No Trumps comes from these five essential plays:

- ENTRIES between the hands so that cards finally established can be cashed
- PRESSURISING the opponents into having to discard their 'winners'.
- TIMING when to lose and when to take a trick.
- COUNTING– eg knowing that the little 7 of clubs is the best card left in that suit
- Recognising which is THE SAFE HAND to lose to.

When your partner puts down dummy you have to stop and see what *entries* exist between the two hands – if there are no obvious ones *can you develop one?*

Plan to play the suits in which you have the most cards early on so that any opponent with a shortage is *pressured* to discard what could later be a later winner or a guard protecting an honour.

Think *when* it is best to take that ace or whether it is safer to postpone that winner. Don't be scared of losing the odd trick – in no trumps that good ace can't be trumped (but it can be left uncashed if you do not have an entry to it!).

Counting the number of cards played in each suit is essential to recognise your own winners or opponents winners.

When your only stopper in a suit is a king, you must avoid losing a trick to the opponent on the side which can lead *through* that king, so when there is a choice for a finesse think – can I afford to lose this finesse? – will it give the lead to the danger hand and jeopardise my king hold?

The added difficulty in playing NT is rewarded by getting game points from 3NT as against 4 of a major or 5 of a minor. An extra 10 points at home is unimportant but it can give a top in a duplicate session at the club so it is not to be sneezed at. Of course many hands are not suitable for NT play and the player who always tries to play in NT will frequently come a cropper, but we should not be afraid when tackling a contract in No Trumps.

Here are a few examples of the plays mentioned above:

Dummy has 10 6 3 opposite your K J 5 in hearts: it may **create an entry** to lead K and later J (assuming you cannot be in dummy to try a finesse – opponents may take their Q and A leaving your 5 to get across to the 10 on the table to run off some unavailable winners.

You have AK 9 5 3 of clubs on the table and no other entry, while in your own hand you have 862.

This being your longest suit you want to play early but nothing to finesse: it could be a good play to lead a small club from hand and play low from the table – you **lose a trick an early trick** but perhaps next time in hand when you lead clubs again the A K take out the missing cards and you make the 9 and the 5 as well.

Your only honour in Diamonds is the K x x x on the table (N) – fortunately defenders did not lead a diamond. You have K J x x hearts in your own hand (S) and A 10 x x on the table – given other holds but no indication of where the missing HQ is you can finesse either way, but you can protect your K Diamonds by finessing to the A and 10 dummy because if it fails E (**the 'safe' hand**) wins the trick but cannot lead *through* the DK, only *up* to it which means you still have a stopper (for now anyway!).

Here's hoping you will all come to enjoy playing in NT!