



News and Views

This month, for the first time, we are distributing the newsletter by email. So, if we have your email address, you will be receiving this online. We will still be making the newsletter available at the club, principally for those members who are not on our email list. Goff Ashwell (g.a.ashwell@inspire.net.nz) is still collecting email addresses of members, so if you haven't sent him yours then please do so.

On the 26th April we have one of our big events of the year, the Palmerston North Open Pairs. Preparations are well underway and we are anticipating a great day's bridge for all. I don't play at too many open events at other clubs, but the ones I have been to this year at Hawera and Feilding were notable for the number of their Intermediate and even Junior members who were taking part. I remember I went along to our Open Tournament as a Junior for several years without making any impact on the leader board, but it is all good experience and good fun. So, come on Intermediates and Juniors, give it a go!

As you are, no doubt, aware one of our traditional sponsors for this event, Skywards, has been hit recently by the OzJet fiasco, but they still intend to give us some support, which I think is great in the circumstances. We are still looking for a sponsor for our Intermediate Tournament so if you have any ideas (or, better still, any contacts) then get in touch with Elsie Beale (EBeale@clear.net.nz) who organizes our tournament sponsors.

Recently, a visitor from another club was heard to comment that they felt one or two of our players were "unfriendly", and they were disinclined to play at our club again. There was no official complaint and no names were mentioned so I didn't feel it should be taken any further, although I did make an announcement on the following Tuesday asking players to ensure they were courteous to their opponents.

Surprisingly, a few weeks later there was a more detailed complaint about the behaviour of a player during a subsequent Tuesday night session. This is currently under investigation but in discussions with the person who raised the matter,

it was clear they were not sure what steps they should take.

We discussed the issue at this month's Bridge Club Committee meeting and there were a variety of opinions. Some felt we should keep a register of complaints, and review them periodically. Others believed that this was heavy-handed and the matter should be dealt with by directors in the session itself. We decided to keep our response low-key at the moment but to highlight to members what action they should take.

First, (as it states in the Programme) if you feel someone has been deliberately rude, or breached the general rules of etiquette of the game, then you may need to call the director. The director should assess the situation and, if necessary, apply Law 74 which empowers him/her to apply a procedural penalty. The room rep should also be informed about what has happened and it might be useful to have a three-sided discussion after play, when, hopefully, tempers have subsided. The room rep should only raise the matter at the committee level if they feel it is a continuing problem.

That said, don't be too heavy on the trigger. Some players like to focus on the cards and don't wish to chat during or after hands. If someone seems offhand when you play against them then that is just something you may have to live with.

If you have any strong opinions on this issue or wish to raise any other matter of concern, just contact me (r.kemp@xtra.co.nz) and I will publish any relevant emails (as long as they aren't libellous!)

Lastly, the Monday novice classes are going well with about thirty budding bridge players. Wayne Burrows is doing a great job of teaching them the basics. He has an easy manner and keeps the atmosphere light with jokes and other ad lib comments. He also has a comprehensive set of notes for the learners. Our next job will be to try to get this group to a level where they can play competitively. We aim to have a transition period after the lessons have finished, so they can be ready to compete at the Junior level.

Ray Kemp

Never Say Never Again

Wouldn't bridge be boring and predictable if the mantras we learn as novices worked all the time? "Eight-ever, nine-never" "Never compete at the five level" "Never lead an unsupported ace" "Never finesse towards the window." These

guidelines are useful (except, perhaps, the last one) but the number of exceptions is high and each situation has to be assessed on its merits.

For example, "Eight-ever, nine-never" refers to the recommended strategy for playing trumps when the queen is missing. In the absence of other information, if declarer has eight trumps between the two hands they should finesse, and if they have nine it is very slightly better to play for the drop. That rider at the beginning of the sentence is crucial, however, since we often have other clues to where the queen might be which change the odds.

In the February New Zealand Bridge Magazine, a deal is described where declarer is playing in a four hearts contract, with nine hearts between the two hands but missing the queen. Marginally, it is better to play off the ace-king, hoping to drop the queen rather than taking the finesse, but, in this case, one of the opponents had opened a weak two in spades. Statistically, it then becomes more likely that he is short in hearts and so his partner should be finessed for the queen.

In the Tuesday Teams in March, I had a difficult lead decision which, being in the nature of teams, could have won or lost us the twelve board match. Neither side was vulnerable and the bidding was short and to the point:

North	East	South	West
1NT	pass	6D	pass
pass	pass		

Sitting West, I had to lead from the following hand:

S	AT
H	9832
D	Q83
C	Q942

North's bid showed a balanced 12-14 points. Over to you: which card are you fingering?

My thoughts were that South had a highly distributional hand, probably containing at least seven diamonds to the ace-king. He also had corresponding shortages although not a void in spades. Why not? Because North's hand was likely to have a maximum of four spades for her bid, so if South had no spades, this would leave East with seven or more of the suit and I was pretty sure my partner would have overcalled spades in these circumstances.

If my analysis was correct then I would make my diamond queen at some stage but had to claim

my spade trick before it ran away. Ken Bateman wrote an item in the last newsletter showing a deal where leading an unsupported ace was disastrous and he was right to point out the hazards of such a lead. Often it is a bad idea. However, as you can see from the full hands, shown below, in this case the ace of spades was the only lead that defeated the contract.

S	8732
H	AKQ4
D	J9
C	K53

S	AT
H	9832
D	Q83
C	Q942

S	Q964
H	T65
D	7
C	JT876

S	KJ5
H	J7
D	AKT6542
C	A

South's best plan if a club or heart is led is to take the trick in hand, draw two rounds of diamonds leaving in the queen and then to throw his spades on the extra hearts and club. West will get a diamond eventually, but it will be too late to take down the slam.

Ray Kemp

Postscript

A man has a severe heart attack and is rushed to the hospital emergency room. The admitting nurse says, "I'm sorry, you'll have to wait in line."

"But I might be *dying!*" says the man.

"Sorry, a doctor will see you when one is available."

Then an ambulance races up with its siren blaring, and a woman is carried in on a stretcher. A paramedic explains, "She was in a terrible accident and has just stopped breathing."

"I'm sorry," says the nurse, "she'll have to wait in line."

Next a guy walks in without assistance, whispers something to the nurse and is taken immediately to the examination room, surrounded by doctors.

"What's *this?*" says the first man. "How come he goes right in?"

"Oh," explains the nurse, "he's a bridge player and his partner just passed his cue-bid."