



## News and Views

Last month, we learned that the Charitable Trust had awarded us \$2,000 towards the planned fence for our site. This was far short of what we applied for, but it has been hard to get any funds so we should be grateful for the help it gives us. At its last meeting the Bridge Club Committee decided to recommend that we go ahead with building a fence using this money and drawing upon our existing funds. As the evenings get lighter and warmer it is likely that we will suffer from intruder problems again and be forced to employ a car park attendant – a costly on-going expense. Consequently, there will be a Special General Meeting at 7pm on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September in the clubrooms (to be held before the normal Intermediate night bridge) to discuss the matter.

The annual interclub match with Wanganui was held in August at our clubrooms. It was a friendly affair apart from a couple of skirmishes and Palmerston North managed to retain the Wilkin Cup reasonably comfortably. As noted by Evelyn Hurley, who accepted the trophy on behalf of the club, Rob Wilkin was a very good player, who, many years back, partnered her husband, Bob. Together, they won the Senior Championship twice in the early 1970s. Many thanks to Martin Carryer for his efforts in getting together the six teams of four that were required, to Wayne Burrows for directing, and to all the other helpers who contributed time and plates.

Ada Smart's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated in style at the club during August. There was a delicious birthday cake, lots of other goodies, and, in pride of place, Ada's birthday card from the queen. Ada made a short speech thanking everyone for coming along, and said how much enjoyment she had had from the game over the years. Thanks to Noeline Kenning and helpers who organized the event.

I was unable to get to our Intermediate tournament last month but understand that it went well. The event was won by a Wanganui couple with Bev Colville and Sue Parker second, and Bev Beattie and Jo Haddon third. Thanks to Lorraine

for masterminding the event, to Evelyn Hurley who presented prizes and assisted with the catering and to other members for their help.

Bev Colville has asked me to let members know that the Pahiatua fish and chip night this year will be held on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October. More details can be found on the tournament notice board.

On the last two Tuesdays of September (22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>) we plan to have open pairs nights when we will either allocate partners at random, or have an individual event depending upon numbers. So come along, with or without a partner.

Ray Kemp

## Balancing Act

Handling an opponent's pre-empt can be a tricky business, particularly if they have opened the bidding at the three level. There is always the worry that they are duping you out of your contract, but there is little space to find out what your best spot might be. The situation is worst when the opponents open three of a major. You may have the choice of committing your side to bidding at the four level, doubling the opponents or leaving the decision to your partner.

In one of the Tuesday evening teams matches this month, South had a difficult decision to make. Their call could win or lose the match for their side.

What would you do? You are second in hand, vulnerable against non-vulnerable opponents and East has opened the bidding with a pre-emptive three hearts. Here is your hand:

♠ Q2  
♥ QT3  
♦ AT97  
♣ AK64

None of the options looks very appealing. Passing with fifteen points seems timid. Your partner might have 10-11 points, in which case you could miss a vulnerable game. Most people play a double at this level for takeout, but the danger of this course of action is that your partner may assume you have a spade suit and, with a decent hand and four spades could jump to four spades. At this vulnerability you really don't want to be in such a misfit contract, particularly if West decides to double for penalties. Similarly, overcalling four clubs or four diamonds seems foolhardy.

One tempting option is to bid three no trumps. The logic goes this way. Opener may have about seven points and a shortage in spades. Since there are forty points in the pack and you have fifteen of them, you might expect West and North to share the rest of the points. From this point of view partner could have about nine points. By a similar analysis they could also have four or five spades. If this works out, then you could make three no trumps, particularly if East's only points are the AK of hearts.

I polled the Grand Masters in the club to gauge their opinions. Interestingly, the ones that replied all came to the same conclusion. They all agreed that the best course of action is to pass. Any other bid is too risky.

There are various reasons for this. First, South doesn't have any information about West's strength. South is in what is sometimes called the 'nutcracker' seat. If they make an unwise choice, West will have a pretty good idea of the situation and can bid on or double for penalties as they see fit.

Secondly, South's hand is not that brilliant. There is no five card suit, and four of the points are in unprotected queens, which may be useless. Thirdly, and most importantly, the danger of missing game is minimal as long as North can find a bid if West passes. You may think that there is a blind spot here. North may have ten or eleven points and feel unable to bid. The answer to that is that they *must* find a bid if they possibly can. They are 'balancing' the auction, and 'protecting' partner.

Balancing is a key feature of partnership understanding and is just as important at the one level as at the two or three level. If the person in front of you opens and a takeout double, an overcall or a no trump bid are all out of the question then you should consider passing with 15 or even more points. You hope to come into the auction later, but partner must be prepared to protect your hand by finding a bid even with a mediocre hand if your left hand opponent passes.

When you play with a new partner, after deciding upon your main system and all your conventions, you could ask "Do you balance?" If

they reply "Of course" then you are in luck. If, instead, they look at you as if *you* are unbalanced, then you could be in trouble. Further information on balancing can be found in Wikipedia and Karen Walker's bridge site:

<http://home.comcast.net/~kwbridge/>

So, back to our original problem. Here are the four hands.

	♠ T86		
NS Vul	♥ 6		
Dealer East	♦ J842		
	♣ QT875		
♠ AKJ9543		♠ 7	
♥ K8		♥ AJ97542	
♦ KQ3		♦ 65	
♣ 9		♣ J32	
	♠ Q2		
	♥ QT3		
	♦ AT97		
	♣ AK64		

At our table, South elected to bid three no trumps over my three hearts opener. My partner, after much thought, took the slightly risky but potentially lucrative step of doubling. North was now in a quandary. He had no reason to believe that a contract of four clubs or four diamonds would play any better than three no trumps and would be at one level higher, so elected to pass. East was happy to leave in the double and South, having no obvious place to run to, also passed.

I will skip over the sordid details, but we took the first nine tricks, and were able to write 1400 in the plus column. Our team-mates were relieved when we came to score-up. At their table, the bidding had gone the same way, except that West had passed the three no trump bid, so South, despite conceding the first ten tricks, had only lost 600, giving us a profit of 800.

So remember, think twice before overcalling when you have no obvious bid, but make sure your partner knows about balancing.

Ray Kemp

## A Grand Slam or Not

	♠ T82		
NIL VUL	♥ 52		
WEST	♦ T98652		
	♣ T6		
♠ A643		♠ QJ5	
♥ 43		♥ AKQJ	
♦ Q74		♦ AKJ	
♣ AQ82		♣ K73	
	♠ K97		
	♥ T9876		
	♦ 3		
	♣ J954		

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♣ <sup>1</sup>	Pass
2♠	Pass	4NT <sup>2</sup>	Pass
5♥ <sup>3</sup>	Pass	7NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Stayman
2. Blackwood
3. Two Aces

How often since you held 24 HCP and heard your partner open the bidding at the one-level? I recall a hand at the club some years ago when Laurie Creamer, I believe, heard his partner open the bidding 1♣ when he, himself, held 23 HCP. They were playing Precision so the 1♣ opening promised sixteen or more high card points. Laurie immediately responded 7NT – a spectacular leap from lowest available bid to the highest. That contract was cold.

On the first Tuesday in August some Easts on the Senior/Senior Reserve night had a similar experience when they held 24 HCP and their partner opened the bidding – probably with 1NT if playing ACOL or Precision, and with 1♣ if playing Standard American.

The auction shown is from my table where East first checked to see if there was a 4-4 major fit and then asked for aces before optimistically leaping to the Grand Slam. I say optimistically because the auction had not revealed the location of the missing ♠ K. Given that East could have asked for kings 7NT was really an out and out gamble (and even

more so if 4NT was actually Roman Key Card Blackwood which would have revealed that one key-card was missing.) Probably if West had had the ♠ K then there would have been 13 tricks – four spades, four hearts and two ace-kings in the minors for 12 tricks and then West would have had to have one of the missing queens or at worst the ♣ J to make up twelve high card points. So the Grand would not have been worse than a finesse and might have been significantly better. It would have been a fair gamble.

When the ♠ K was missing, however, the contract was quite shakey. Now, at best, it depended on the spade finesse. In actual play thirteen tricks were made at some tables but, in fact, even with the favorable position of the ♠ K West can be held to twelve tricks. Can you see how?

North is likely to lead the ♦ 10. Let's say that declarer wins in dummy and takes a spade finesse, South not covering – it is normally standard in these situations to cover the second time a suit is led. Now declarer can abandon spades temporarily and run all of the red suit winners. When the last of these winners is about to be played the final position will be:

	♠ T8		
	♥		
	♦ 98		
	♣ T6		
♠ A		♠ J5	
♥		♥	
♦ 7		♦ K	
♣ AQ82		♣ K73	
	♠ K9		
	♥		
	♦		
	♣ J954		

South will have had to keep four clubs or else declarer's clubs will run and two spades or else the ♠ K will fall under the ace. However, when the final diamond is led South will have no good discard having to give up a trick in either spades or clubs. Declarer could have cashed the ♠ A earlier and the position would be similar.

The trick to defeating this contract is for South to cover the first spade. And then in the end game South will be free to pitch a spade leaving North to guard the spades and the grand slam can no longer be made.

NIL VUL  
WEST

<p>♠ 3 ♥ ♦ 7 ♣ AQ82</p>	<p>♠ T8 ♥ ♦ 98 ♣ T6</p>	<p>♠ J5 ♥ ♦ K ♣ K73</p>
	<p>♠ 97 ♥ ♦ ♣ J954</p>	

Back to the bidding. East was right to explore for a major suit fit since if West had four hearts and a doubleton in either minor 7♥ could easily have been a far superior contract to 7NT. What of the 4NT bid though? Should this be asking for aces or should it be a quantitative bid inviting a slam if partner is maximum? On a simpler auction 1NT-4NT, it is played as quantitative inviting slam but not forcing. It seems sensible that this should be the same after a Staymanic major suit enquiry. I mean why after not finding a fit should you not be able to invite slam quantitatively. Therefore it is normally standard for the auctions 1NT-2♣-2♦/♥/♠ 4NT all to be quantitative announcing that we have not found a fit and showing a hand that is invitational to 6NT.

If you want to show a fit then a clever trick is to jump in a new suit which would be a cue-bid agreeing partner's major. Thereafter you can continue cuebidding or ask for aces.

This is the complete scheme that I would recommend:

- 1NT 2♣
- 2♦ 2♥/♠ Natural to play typically 5=4 or 4=5 in the majors but 4=4 is possible
- 2NT Invitational
- 3♣/♦ Natural and forcing – some play these as weak
- 3♥/♠ Forcing to game with 4=5 or 5=4 in the majors respectively

- 1NT 2♣
- 2♥ 2♠ Not really needed unless 2♣ did not promise a major when this shows four spades and 2NT denies four spades
- 2NT Invitational
- 3♣/♦ Forcing
- 3♥ Invitational
- 3♠ Cue-bid – slammish
- 3NT To play
- 4♣/♦ Cue-bid – slammish

- 1NT 2♣
- 2♠ 2NT Invitational
- 3♣/♦ Forcing
- 3♥ Cue-bid (even though it is not a jump) – slammish
- 3♠ Invitational
- 3NT To play
- 4♣/♦ Cue-bid – slammish

### Wayne Burrows

### Double Dilemma

OK. You have met this situation a hundred times before. Perhaps this time you'll get it right. You have a useful hand but the opponents bid up into the stratosphere. You are in pass out position after their latest ridiculous bid. Do you put up (bid on), shut up (pass) or punish them (double)?

You are optimistic when, as South, you pick up your cards, vulnerable against non-vulnerable opponents:

♠ AQJ53  
♥ AK52  
♦ 942  
♣ 2

You only have fourteen points but they are nicely placed, and the singleton is a bonus. It looks likely you will be playing the contract, but things don't go according to plan.

West	North	East	South
2NT	Pass	Pass	1S
		5C	?

You think carefully. The 2NT overcall shows both minors and it is a pity you and your partner have not discussed a defence to this. She might have some decent cards but be unable to make a free bid at the three level. More to the point, what have the opponents got? East looks as if she is making a pre-emptive sacrifice. How can they do this to you? They are probably going down but you can't be sure so reluctantly pass. However, this isn't the end of the bidding. West now has the temerity to bid six clubs which is passed around to you. Now is the moment of truth. What do you do?

I know what I would do. I would double on principle. Surely, the opponents have over-extended themselves. Fortunately for me, I wasn't sitting South because any bid except pass would be a big mistake. The deal occurred during one Monday afternoon session during August.

	♠ 86	
	♥ QJ8764	
	♦ J765	
	♣ T	
♠ K9		♠ T742
♥ -		♥ T93
♦ AKQT8		♦ 3
♣ Q98763		♣ AKJ54
	♠ AQJ53	
	♥ AK52	
	♦ 942	
	♣ 2	

I am sitting West and like to play the 2NT overcall as either weak or strong. Partner initially assumes it is weak of course, but hopefully will realize how good my hand is when I bid on. Since she has bid up to the five level thinking I have a poor hand, I reckon it is worth giving the slam a try.

And did South double at our table? No! She quietly passed. As you can see, that was the right decision since six clubs makes on any lead. Even if North finds a heart bid at some stage, and NS bid up to six hearts this would go four down, which, doubled would come to a score of 1100, much more than the 920 for a non-vulnerable small slam for EW. So congratulations to Christine Compton sitting South at our table for showing commendable restraint.

Ray Kemp

## Postscript

At bridge, it is not whether you win or lose that counts but how you place the blame.

Ray Kemp