



Editorial

Hail Spring!

Thanks to Ray Kemp for another article. I hope you are out in your gardens; and also that you still have the time to read the newsletter.

Ross Quayle

rossquayle@slingshot.co.nz

Club Results for August

Congratulations to all our winners.

Monday:	Bob Lawrence/ Kay Townsley	61.43%
Junior:	Clare Hadley/ Wayne Taylor	59.26%
Senior and Senior	Ray Kemp/ Barry Xiao	53.78%
Reserve:		
Intermediate:	Jiren Li/Barry Xiao/ Ernest Sands/Jim Esson	147 VPs%
Friday:	Don Kenning/ Bob Lawrence	55.41%

Babich Wines NZ-Wide Pairs

The Committee has agreed to run this event on Friday 4th November. Nearby clubs will be invited too.

NZ Bridge Magazine Promotion

NZ Bridge will allow any club that sells a \$40 new annual subscription of the magazine to retain \$15 for club funds. The offer closes on 31 October 2011. See the noticeboard for more details.

Club Carpark for Rugby World Cup

The Club is charging \$10 per carpark on the days of the Rugby World Cup. Please promote this to your friends and colleagues. Payment by cash or internet banking, pre-booking strongly preferred. The gates will be opened 1 hour before kick-off,

closed during the match, and cars to leave no later than one hour after the match. Further details on Goff's email.

Coaching for improvers

September's session is cancelled due to a booking clash. They are on again from October, on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

PN Intermediate Pairs

This event is on Saturday 8 October. Robert Harris Café has agreed to sponsor.

Broadband internet

The club now has broadband installed. Thanks to Lorraine, and a generous anonymous donation of \$500 received from a Club member to help with installation costs.

Locking of Library

For a trial period (until the end of the year) the library will be left unlocked during playing sessions. This will make it easier for members to look at the books e.g. when they are phantom.. Details of how to borrow books are on the library door.

Hand Evaluation

Recently I have been helping out with the beginners' classes. One of the first rules of bidding we give them is to count their high card points and only to open with twelve points or more. Of course, this is a simplification but beginners need simple rules without introducing lots of exceptions. For example, if you picked up a hand containing the thirteen spades you will only have ten points, but the experienced player would not pass because of this.

Another issue that we simplify is when to open with a forcing bid. This occurs when you have a hand that may make game even if partner has five or fewer points, when they would likely pass an ordinary opener. Many Acol and Standard American players put the lower limit for a forcing bid at 19 or 20 points but this, again, is only an approximation. If you have a highly distributional hand then any points assessment can go out the window.

Take, for example, the following hand that occurred in the senior rotational pairs competition in June.

♠ AKQ54
 ♥ AQT7542
 ♦ J
 ♣ -

There are sixteen high card points in the hand so it is tempting to start with a bid of one heart and see what happens. In fact, when I asked a number of players at the club, that is exactly what most of them suggested. I would contend, however, that you should open with a forcing bid.

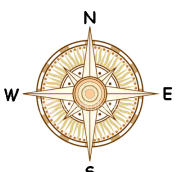
With highly distributional hands the HCP method for evaluation is often inadequate. An alternative approach is to count playing tricks. Here, you estimate how many tricks your hand is likely to produce assuming normal distribution of the cards in the other three hands.

In the above example, you have five spades, and might expect partner to have two or three of the other eight. So some of the time you will make four spade tricks and sometimes five. Therefore, you assess the number of playing tricks in the suit as four and a half. Similarly in hearts you would expect your partner on average to have two card support, so sometimes you may make six tricks in the suit and sometimes seven, giving an average of six and a half tricks. The minor suits add nothing to your count so you estimate your total playing tricks as eleven. This suggests that with typical breaks you can expect to make eleven tricks from your own hand! So, using this evaluation, you have to open with a forcing bid, and would normally expect to reach a slam if your partner can produce any kind of positive response.

Out of interest, I entered the hand onto the computer and generated twenty deals. In each case, the cards for the other three players were distributed at random. In these deals, it turned out that partner had anything between zero and fifteen points. In every deal a game was cold, in thirteen a small slam could be made and in five others the grand slam was a virtual laydown.

So what happened on the night? Here are the hands:

♠ AKQ54
 ♥ AQT7542
 ♦ J
 ♣ -

♠ T98		♠ J632
♥ KJ		♥ 6
♦ AT96		♦ 843
♣ 9874		♣ AQJ32

♠ 7
 ♥ 983
 ♦ KQ752
 ♣ KT65

North has a little bit of work to do but should bring home the small slam in hearts, even with a combined total of only twenty four points between the two hands. At worst, once a spade is ruffed as an entry to take the heart finesse, then the spade suit is set up.

Ray Kemp

A hand from the Club teams.

Here is a hand from the teams on Tuesday 13 September. This article comes with a couple of disclaimers. One is that this is not a dramatic slam hand or big swing, just a humble part score. The second is that ordinarily I try to write for all levels of readers, but this one is probably not very suitable for beginners. (Let me know what you think.) However, whatever your level of experience, I hope it stimulates your thought processes. Declarer faces a number of clear choices; there are inferences to be drawn; and how all the options inter-relate makes analysis a bit complicated. And, of course, these are also the reasons why bridge appeals to me so much.

I was West. The dealer was South, and E-W were vulnerable.

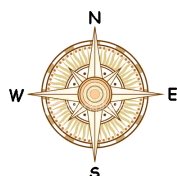
The bidding went:

South	West	North	East
2S	Pass	Pass	Pass

2S was a Tartan opening, showing spades and a minor, less than opening strength.

The full hands were:

	♠ Q65		
	♥ K75		
	♦ K10976		
	♣ 98		
♠ 7		♠ K1042	
♥ AQJ96		♥ 108	
♦ A852		♦ J43	
♣ 1064		♣ AQJ2	
	♠ AJ983		
	♥ 432		
	♦ Q		
	♣ K753		



So the first decision, as always, is what to lead. I considered that if declarer has nine cards at least in spades and a minor, and only ten points, the chances of her holding the King of hearts are fairly slim. If partner has it, great; and if dummy has it then it is still an attacking lead that does no harm. So I led the Ace of hearts, which won, and continued with the Queen.

Now the attention shifts to declarer. Likely losers now include two hearts, one spade, and the minor aces, so this contract is on the brink and nothing else is allowed to go wrong.

I have managed to find the best lead. A spade, diamond or club would all have been helpful in some way. Declarer wants to lead trumps from dummy; clubs from dummy, up to the King; and can possibly set up one or more diamond tricks in dummy if she can get there enough times; but the lead attacks the only sure entry.

Declarer played the King of hearts and led a small diamond, to the Queen and Ace. I played the Jack of hearts, which won, and on this partner

played the two of clubs. When you look at his hand you can see why – it is the only card in his hand that is not of some potential value. However he has a great club holding, and the two is a definitely discouraging signal!. I had been intending to lead a club next, but now thought better of it and lead a diamond. Declarer took the King in dummy, discarding a club, and lead the Queen of spades to the King and Ace. However a spade continuation means getting no club ruff, and so declarer was forced to lead away from the club King and went one down.

So what is the secret of the hand? I think for declarer it is to count losers, (five), and decide straight away that the club Ace simply has to be onside. (I cannot see a reasonable line to make if it is not). At trick three a club from dummy sets up the King; and prepares for at least one club ruff. The Queen of diamonds can just as easily be led from hand. It was tempting to possibly sneak a diamond trick if East has the Ace, but it is a Greek gift. Even if the Queen scores for free, the King will not and therefore you will need to ruff two clubs; therefore you want to lead clubs early, but you have no entry to dummy so must now lead away from the King.

The secret of the hand for me is a bit harder to see. After taking my heart trick I was aware that leading a diamond was probably a mistake, and I berated myself for not leading a club. However, further thought shows that neither of these options works. A club lead sets up declarer's King, (and a ruff), and a diamond provides an entry which allows the club lead from dummy to the same end. My winning play is my singleton trump! – which seems foolish because surely it helps declarer. It does – but a club or a diamond helps more. Partner suggested I could have led another heart, providing a ruff-and-slough. This is seldom a good idea, but his plan was he could discard a club so that he could then over-ruff dummy. A cunning plan indeed, but it fails because dummy can also discard a club and thus ruff one round earlier...

I think it is time for a nice hot cup of tea

Ross Quayle