



Clarence Gardens Bridge Centre

Newsletter December 2025



Committee News

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

I shall be retiring from the position of club president, whilst Moira Smith will not be continuing as club secretary. The committee positions currently held by Cynthia Brinkman and Stuart Tuck will also be declared vacant, each having completed their two year term.

New Toilet Policy

In the past, players were permitted to make trips to the toilet under informal guidelines. This frequently resulted in disruption of play and over-crowding of the toilets during the supper breaks. Effective immediately, the club has instituted a toilet policy designed to establish and provide proper control over this situation.

Under the policy, a "toilet trip bank" will be established for each player. The first day of each month players will be given one toilet trip credit for each session that they regularly attend. Non-members will be only entitled to half the normal allocation, whilst new members will receive an extra credit each month for their first three months of membership. There will, however, be no pensioner or life member concessions. Unused credits may be accumulated.

Within the next two weeks the entrance doors of all the toilets will be equipped with Personal Identification Stations and computer-linked voice print recognition devices. Before the end of the month each player must provide two voice prints (one normal and one under stress) to the Director. The voice print recognition stations will be operational but not restrictive for the rest of this month, so players should acquaint themselves with the stations during this period.

If the player's toilet trip bank balance reaches zero then the toilet doors will not unlock for the player's voice until the following month. In addition, all toilet rolls are being equipped with timed paper roller retractors. If the toilet is occupied for more than three minutes then an alarm will sound. Thirty seconds after the alarm, the toilet roll will retract into the dispenser, the toilet will flush automatically, and the door will open. If the toilet remains occupied then the occupant's picture will be taken.

These pictures will then be posted on the notice-board, anyone whose picture is taken on more than two occasions automatically losing all recent masterpoint credits.

The Meanings of the Makeable Contracts Table

When you select "Full Board Details" for your session scores you will see the hand record on your left, all the scores on the right, and what follows in the middle.

Makeable Contracts						
					NT	
N	3	5	-	4	-	
S	3	5	-	4	-	
E	-	-	2	-	-	
W	-	-	2	-	-	
Hand Solver						
All Hands Solver						

You should be aware that the analysis to produce these figures doesn't follow normal bridge etiquette, the results achieved often by devious means.

The program, Dealmaster Pro, peeks! It looks at all four hands and then often behaves quite differently from what is considered normal, or even proper.

For example, with the following suit layout it will happily lead the Jack from the North hand, covered, Ace, then finesse the ten on the way back.

KJ9

1087 Q32

A65

I have also seen it open lead a small trump from Kx to partner's singleton Queen, the only way to defeat the contract.

So, it should be taken as a rough guide only, and if your partner says "DMPRO says that you should have made that contract" you should point out that the program has often failed when you have been successful.

A Safety Play - Can You Ensure Your Contract?

Your contract is 6♣ by South. Plan your play on a diamond lead.

♠A632

♥-

♦652

♣Q87542

♠KQJ

♥AKQJ5

♦A

♣A1093

Opening lead ♠5. Plan your play, answer back page.

Teams Bridge

I much prefer teams bridge to duplicate. Nothing compares to the shared joy of winning a close contest (I have been in several recently).

In a teams game you and your partner sit one direction, your team mates the other, you play the same boards and then convert your net results using the following scale.

IMPS Conversion Scale

Margin	Imps	Margin	Imps	Margin	Imps	Margin	Imps
0-10	0	220-260	6	600-740	12	1750-1990	18
20-40	1	270-310	7	750-890	13	2000-2240	19
50-80	2	320-360	8	900-1090	14	2250-2490	20
90-120	3	370-420	9	1100-1290	15	2500-2990	21
130-160	4	430-490	10	1300-1490	16	3000-3490	22
170-210	5	500-590	11	1500-1740	17	3500-3990	23

As you can see it's the extent of the difference on each board that counts. Whilst in a pairs game you can get a top board by playing in 3NT getting the same number of tricks as players elsewhere in four of a major, in teams there is no gain at all!

Instead, it is important to bid your games and slams, while not conceding large penalties. Similarly, when defending, the objective has to be to defeat the contract, rather than minimising the overtricks.

The vulnerability also plays its part in tactics. Using the above scale, bidding and not bidding a non-vulnerable game will, when compared with the other table doing the opposite, either gain 6 imps ($420-170 = 250$) if the contract makes, or lose 5 imps ($140+50$) if it fails, so statistically such a game should be called if it's chances of success exceed 45%.

Similarly, bidding and not bidding a vulnerable game will either net you 10 imps ($620-170$) or, if your contract fails, your team will lose 6 imps ($140+100$). So, vulnerable games should be bid if the chance of success exceeds 38%.

By this method, bidding and not bidding a not vulnerable small slam either earns you 11 imps ($980-480$), or costs 11 imps ($50+450$), so such a slam should have at least a 50% probability. Similarly, a vulnerable slam will either gain or cost you 13 imps.

In a recent match I was dealt the following hand and saw partner open a 15-17 hcp 1NT.

♠A6
♥K762
♦976
♣Q965

I didn't like my hand due to its lack of intermediate cards, and considered the following:

- Partner is three times more likely to have a 15 hcp than 17
- We weren't vulnerable.

- With 24 or 25 points between us, and two balanced hands, game makes about half the time.

So, I passed, partner had 17 hcp, fortunately we lacked a major fit and the opponents were able to hold us to just seven tricks. We gained 6 imps, and went on to win the State Teams Semi Final by just 2!

A Hand from the State Teams finals

♠5	♠AJ10
♥AK9853	♥QJ104
♦10942	♦AKQ6
♣K3	♣A9

West, the dealer, opens 1♥, the hand being too strong for a weak two opening.

How would your auction go? Can you reach 7♥?

My partner and I, if no interference, would bid as follows:

West	East
1♥	2NT (game forcing with four card support)
3♠ (shortage)	4♠ (keycard Blackwood)
5♦ (two key cards, no♥Q)	5♠ (I have the ♥Q, any Kings?)
6♣ (club King)	7♥

Male Chauvinist Club by Ron Klinger

In 1974 the esteemed Australian bridge player, teacher, author and personal friend wrote a brilliant article about how to play bridge with your wife. I have copied it out from the July 1974 edition of Australian Bridge, you can see it for yourself at www.bridgeinthecity.net.au/newsletter/Male_Chauvinist_Club.pdf

P.S. When I forwarded a copy to Ron he thanked me profusely, however, did say that such an article, if written these days would have the author run out of town on a rail!

Recent Placegetters

MONDAY NOVEMBER PAIRS

- 1 Maja Reed & Ann Wagner
- 2 Chris Barnwell & Stewart Kingsborough
- 3 Geraldine & Shelley Eitzen

FRIDAY NOVEMBER PAIRS

- 1 Susan Phillips & Judith Roberts
- 2 Chris Barnwell & Stewart Kingsborough
- 3 Fernanda Ferreira & Dennis Miles

FRIDAY PINK NOVEMBER PAIRS

- 1 Janet Hegarty & Janice Paltridge
- 2 Ken Stone & Peter Tuck
- 3 Trevor Parr & Sue Riddle

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

Bridge Theories

During the depression years Eli Culbertson was able to attract a small army of Contract Bridge researchers - they were frequently out-of-work schoolteachers for whom any job was a bonus. Under the direction of Josephine Culbertson this band of workers was directed to examine many of the bridge theories that were in vogue at the time, usually by examining many thousands of hand records.

Whilst many of the so-called theories proved to be irrational, a lot of statistical evidence supported several of the ideas for which there was no immediate statistical explanation, for example

- If you hold a singleton, then another player at the table will also have one.
- Hand shapes are frequently mirrored by the way a suit divides at the table, e.g. if you hold a 5-4-3-1 distribution, one of the four suits will probably be divided in that manner.
- "Flat" distributional hands tend to go together - if you and your partner both have balanced hands, then the opponents' hands are likely to be balanced.
- The Queen always sits over the Jack - a useful tool in that you get half your guesses correct. The theory has some credence in rubber bridge, where tricks are gathered, but has no credence in duplicate events.
- If you have a distributional hand then most of the other players at the table will also have distributional holdings. An interesting corollary to this idea, however, is that frequently three players will have distributional hands, whilst the fourth will have a 4-4-3-2 or a 4-3-3-3.

These theories, and many others, were all elaborated upon in Culbertson's Gold Book. However, the theory that has achieved a great deal of support from the top players is the Law of Total Tricks, or TNT.

The Law, simply stated, is that if your partnership and the opponents both have good trump fits, the total number of tricks available for both of your contracts equals the total number of trumps. As an example, if your partnership has a nine card heart fit, and the opponents have a ten card spade fit, then the sum of the number of tricks you

can make in hearts, and the number of tricks the opponents can make in spades, equals 19.

Naturally this will not always provide a perfect answer, however extensive hand analysis has shown that the average deviation from the expected is only .4 of a trick.

Larry Cohen, a frequent winner on the U.S. circuit in recent years, based the game he played with Marty Bergen on these principles, in particular by using pre-emptive jump raises whenever they had found a fit. They also examined the Law more closely, and came up with several adjustments, e.g.

- Subtract a trick from the total if you have a holding in the opponent's suit which is worth a defensive trick, however is valueless if your side is declaring.
- Subtract a trick (or more) for misfitting hands.
- Add a trick for a double fit, particularly when you have no wasted cards.
- Add a trick for a seven card or longer suit.

The Law is of particular use in competitive auctions, especially at the upper levels when sacrifices are on offer.

Takeout Doubles

Takeout doubles serve the purpose of encouraging partner to compete in the auction- you have the values, hopefully partner has a biddable suit. You shouldn't find a takeout double just because you have opening values, often when you have the opponent's suits you are better off defending.

Therefore, when you do make a takeout double you should have at least three card support for the unbid major(s), and preferably also for the unbid minors.

You don't need a strong hand for such a call, the better your distribution the less your values requirement – I regularly find takeout doubles on 10 point hands with the right distribution.

Finally, if you do follow this principle then partner will bid more often, confident of your support, for better results.

When the Auction is Finished

The auction ends after three consecutive passes.

- The player to declarer's left tables the opening lead face down.
- Declarer and the other defender may then ask questions about the auction.
- The opening lead is turned face up.
- Dummy comes down.
- All bidding cards are returned to the bidding boxes. (It is permissible to leave the final contract out)

This ensures that all players have access to the auction for clarification before play begins. Premature removal of bidding cards can interfere with proper explanations and may violate etiquette or laws of the game.

2026 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Bridge in the City Incorporated will be held at 11:00 am on **Sunday February 15th** at the Clarence Gardens Bowls Club
Lunch will be served, with a free pairs game to follow.

Safety Play - the Answer

With this trump combination the usual approach is to lay down the ♣Ace, however this line of play fails if East has all the clubs, as happened at the time.

♠A632	
♥-	
♦652	
♣Q87542	
♠1085	♠974
♥9876	♥10432
♦KJ9873	♦Q104
♣-	♣KJ6
♠KQJ	
♥AKQJ5	
♦A	
♣A1093	

Instead, you need to lead a low club towards the North hand, covering any card that West plays. If West follows then play you are home. If instead West shows out you play dummy's ♣Queen, win the return, ruff a heart in dummy, and finesse East's ♣Jack for your contract.

You may get one trick less than others if there is a bare ♣King, however you will have the satisfaction of having properly played your contract.

I used to believe in Santa Claus
Then I didn't believe in Santa Claus
Then I was Santa Claus
Now I look like Santa Claus.