

From the Chair

At last Spring is here and it would seem Covid is finally out of the daily news so hopefully better times lie ahead. The new worry of course is loadshedding which seems as if it will be with us for a long time yet.

On Saturday The Links held an AGM, the first open meeting for a few years. It was fairly well attended and it was obvious that the feeling of all present was The Links must remain open. It is the home of GBU bridge and a terrific venue with its large hall and safe carparking. It was emphasised that The Links online bbo events which began right back at the start of Covid enabling our members to play on all days of the week are subsidising the live face to face Saturday afternoon bridge. The live bridge has got to 12 tables now and if this stays consistent, or hopefully more players join in, then 2 sections can be organised. Those of us who attend enjoy it enormously! It has good atmosphere and a lovely tea is provided, all for R50 a person. There is no substitute for face to face bridge - it is the real thing! So all you apathetic members who used to come, get dressed and get the car out and turn up! If you are in an organised social set in a private house, or playing 'arranged games on bbo', please set Saturday afternoon aside for live bridge and help us once again as the popular expression goes 'get bums on seats!'

However it is my belief that online bridge, namely bbo, is here to stay despite loadshedding problems and stories of cheating. It does serve a purpose giving us an easy bridge 'fix'. A good point was raised at the meeting last Saturday. Could GBU members please put a name to their profile and include Johannesburg somewhere in their profile. Also please accurately describe your level of play! If not listing an accurate description of your playing system on the profile then at least remember to do it in the event! Chat Manager is a useful gadget and I have many sentences listed there which pertain to my different partners. I also heard that some bbo players do not even say Hello to their opponents! Surely we all do that, whether live or on bbo.

Quite some food for thought!

Yours in bridge,

Deirdre Ingersent

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TIPS ON LEADS

Heard in a Zoom Lecture given by well known local tutor and expert player Craig Gower

INTRODUCTION

Finding a good lead is paramount in the game of bridge and it is important to remember that theoretically half the game is all about defence. Thinking out of the box is often called for. Bring the opponents auction bidding into your thought process and try to visualise what might be in their hands and of course your partner's. So conversely the fewer bids you need as declarer to reach your final contract the better as then little help is given to the opponents with what to lead.

LEADING AGAINST NT CONTRACTS

Leading a long suit works most of the time, but like everything in bridge not all the time! Again listening to the bidding is important. If the opponents have not used Stayman start with a card in one of the major suits. If you hold quite a few points it is sensible to give a passive lead and guard your points. It is popular to lead an ace against a slam but sometimes this backfires leaving the opponents with a suit set up for them.

LEADING AGAINST SUIT CONTRACTS

There is really no hard and fast rule here. Leading a trump can be good (yes even if you only hold one trump!) and is normally considered a passive lead. You want to get a sense of where the high card points are! It is useful if the dummy is short in one of declarer's suits to draw trumps and cut down

on declarer's ability to ruff. Then each time you get in continue with this. Following on from this killing declarer's entries to dummy always a good ploy.

Top of a sequence not always a good lead and a doubleton lead is controversial.

Your own holding must be taken into consideration. If you hold a strong hand partner probably cannot take a trick. If you are weak try leading a short suit.

Paying attention to the bidding again is important. Counting is a primary skill of bridge. Where are the points?

Suits, where 4 cards are missing, will more likely break 3/1 than 2/2 and if 6 cards are missing then break is more likely to be 4/2 than 3/3.

IN CONCLUSION

It is very important to remember that bridge is a partnership game and you need to work with your partner and not in isolation to get that good first lead which will get your defence off to a great start. This opening lead can make or break the contract.

Craig laughingly said (but if you think about it the following is so true!) that the two words NEVER and ALWAYS should not be used at the bridge table! What works one time does not always work.

David Bird is a prolific bridge writer whose books relating to leads and good defence are definitely worth reading.

*Article submitted by **Deirdre Ingersent***

THE BRIDGE LOUNGE

by Jeff Sapire

I was watching a Teams match recently when this interesting situation arose.

South dealer, both vul

NORTH

S 754

H AQ74

D J64

C AK2

WEST

S A3

H J1098

D A105

C QJ109

EAST

S 1096

H K632

D 873

C 543

SOUTH

S KQJ82

H 5

D KQ92

C 876

West	North	East	South
			1S
Dbf	R'dbf	Pass	2D
Pass	4S	All pass	Opening lead: CQ

After North redoubled to show a good hand of about 9+pts, South followed the standard method of showing a weak opening bid by bidding immediately over the redouble.

Declarer won the club lead and started on trumps. West took the ace and continued with the jack of clubs, won in dummy, followed by two more rounds of trumps. Declarer now played a diamond to dummy's jack, and then another diamond to the queen and ace. West cashed the ten of clubs and continued clubs, ruffed by declarer, who laid down the king of diamonds. When the suit split 3-3 he was home – four trumps, one heart, three diamonds and two clubs.

East was the first to comment. 'Why didn't you switch to a heart after cashing the club trick?' he asked.

'It was quite safe' replied West, 'declarer didn't gain anything from it, with no trumps in the dummy there was no ruff and discard for him to profit from.'

'That's true' continued East, 'but by doing so you gave declarer a chance to see how the diamonds were breaking. When he discovered the suit was 3-3 he had ten tricks without

having to finesse the heart. If you return a heart instead, he has to decide there and then whether to play you for the king of hearts, or hope the diamonds are 3-3.'

East, of course, was spot on. By woodenly continuing clubs, West gave declarer the time to test diamonds first, and then, if necessary, fall back on the heart finesse, whereas a switch to the jack of hearts instead of the fourth club would have forced him into a nasty, premature guess. One aspect of good defence is cutting down declarer's options, forcing him to make critical decisions before more is known. On this hand, it is not at all clear what the best line would be – West may well have the king of hearts for his take out double, but there are enough points available without it.

Improve your hand valuation

by Sid Ismail

If your partnership is not playing enough hands, this "lesson" may come in handy! The two hands were played at Benoni Northerns on 22nd Sept. I will first put the 2 problems in a quiz format.

1. Dealer: West, Vul: Both. You will be SOUTH.



West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	3♥*	Pass	?

*Good raise to 3♠

2. Dealer: South Vul: Both You are NORTH



Pass by partner as dealer and 1♥ is opened on your right.

Do you bid? Why?

In Defence of the Defence - James Grant

Many moons ago Deirdre Ingersent asked me to write an article for the GBU bulletin on any bridge topic I liked and I promised I would. But afterwards when I thought about it I realised there was little I could pass on to you that you don't know already or can read about elsewhere. But a promise is a promise so let us begin.

In Defence of the Defence - James Grant

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago my Maths teacher walked into our class and said “Lads, (yes, back then it was not considered sexist to refer to us as lads, after all we were a boys’ school) now that your O levels are over I’m going to teach you how to play bridge”. I have no recollection of what he actually taught us only that I was fascinated by this new game and hurried down to the local library to see if I could find a book on it. Yes, I remember we had libraries back then full of wonderful books you could read with a special children’s section, but these institutions are slowly being closed down and though I won’t live to see it, books too will disappear and our children will no longer be taught how to read and write.

But back to the story – I found a book called “Right through the Pack” written by a Hungarian and told by the cards themselves. It was full of throw- ins and squeezes and deception plays and reading those stories I fell in love with bridge, a love affair that has lasted a lifetime. For me bidding was boring, the French had got it right when the named the dummy “le mort”, and in defence it was always a battle where my opponents were declarer and partner. Like the Hideous Hog, all I wanted to do was play the hands and hopefully from time to time execute some of the beautiful plays I had read about in this book .Over the years nothing has really changed.

However it didn’t take long for me to discover that it wasn’t much fun playing in a contract of 3 Spades when I could make only 8 tricks, nor playing in that contract when 4 Spades was cold. Like it or not I had to make some attempt to understand bidding. Again I rushed down to the library and this time took out a book called “The Italian Blue Club System” or named something

like that because back then the Italians ruled the Bridge world. But although the book was written in English it had clearly lost something in translation because an opening of 1 Club had little to do with clubs, nor did 1 Diamond have much to do with diamonds. Confused, I shared my frustration with my Maths master and this is what he replied - “I say Old Chap (yes back then it was still politically correct for an elder to call me Old Chap although I was a young boy), you need to go back to the library and take out a book called “ Acol without Tears” by the British author Ben Cohen , over here we call a spade a spade”.

I include this last comment realizing full well that I might be banned from receiving an honorary degree at an overseas university or even arrested, but I include it for its historic al accuracy and the fact that it was the first bridge joke I had ever heard. Many years later I revisited my old school hoping to look up my old Maths master and thank him for the wonderful gift he had given me the day he decided to teach our class bridge only to discover that he had passed away some years before. If there is a Heaven it will surely have a bridge club and I’ll find him there....

But back to the story and the first observation I wish to share with you; right from the beginning I understood that when bidding, a partnership was communicating with each other. The language might be stilted or often misunderstood but by bidding (or not) a player was trying to communicate with partner. An example will suffice to demonstrate what I mean

North opens 1 Spade

If he could speak he would say to his partner I have at least 4 spades (Acol) and no longer suit

In Defence of the Defence - James Grant

and at least 12 high card points (or the distributional equivalent) but no more than 20 points.

South bids 2 Spades

Good news partner, I also hold at least 4 spades and between 6 and 10 high card points so even if you're minimum we should be good for 8 tricks

North bids 3 spades

Thanks partner, in fact I am about an ace better than minimum and now I am interested to know if you are maximum?

South bids 4 Spades

Yes I am!

Back in the day this is how we would reach a game contract, but since then we have honed our bidding to become even more accurate by introducing long suit tries, short suit tries, Bergen raises and all sorts of other paraphernalia to arrive at the right level. And we're still doing it; since starting bridge I have spent literally months (I hesitate to say years) with various partners discussing what this sequence means and what that sequence means and what conventions we should use and like everyone else we still occasionally get it wrong. I have always thought that beginners, certainly for the first few months, should be allowed to state what their bids mean for this is surely the hardest part of bridge to learn. And guess what? BBO is doing exactly this with their robots.

We spend forever learning a bidding system but when discussing defence with partner it rarely goes further than "Standard leads and discards, Pard?" Say it slowly, how long does it take, less than 5 seconds? So

we spend months on our bidding system and 5 seconds on defence though half the hands we play we will be defending.

I knew from the start that when bidding, a partnership was holding a conversation. It took me many years to realize that when the very top players were defending, they were holding a conversation too. And what little I have learned in that area I am going to share with you.

(to be continued)

BIDDING MISUNDERSTANDING

Even the world's great players have bidding misunderstandings in rarely encountered situations. In the 1972 Olympiad the multiple world champions Benito Garozzo and Pietro Forquet of Italy ended in a contract of four hearts with a trump holding of ♥ A-K opposite ♥ 10-9. England's Jeremy Flint had opened with a Multi 2 ♦ (showing either long hearts or long spades) and the greater Italians had a misunderstanding over the meaning of a 4 ♥ bid.



Above: Pietro Forquet. A fabulous cardplayer and member of the Italian Blue Team. He and Benito Garozzo vied for the title of world's best player.

Sid's Solutions

1. Did you meekly sign off in 3S as you are scared yet again of going off?

Consider this: Once partner confirms a spade fit, did you revalue your hand? The singleton club can be counted as an extra 3 points now, thus giving you 16 points! Furthermore, you suspect that partner is short in hearts as hearts were bid and supported and you have 3. All in all, this hand should play well in game. Bid 4♠!

Note how partner revalued the North hand to show a "good raise".

20	♠ QJ98	Dir: W	
	♥ 3	Vul: Both	
	♦ 853		
	♣ KQT76		
♠ 6	♠ T74		
♥ AK6	♥ QJT942		
♦ JT42	♦ K9		
♣ J5432	♣ A8		
8	♠ AK532	♠ ♣ ♥ ♦	
9	♥ 875		N - 3 - 4 -
10	♦ AQ76		S - 3 - 4 -
13	♣ 9		E - - 2 - -
		W - - 2 - -	

2. What did YOU do on the hand in question? Did you pass 1♥? Please follow the argument I will now lay out:

♠ KQ94
♥ 3
♦ K543
♣ Q853

"If my partner has 4+ cards in spades, diamonds or clubs, we will have a decent fit. We can a) fight for the part score, b) indicate a lead, or c) find a cheap sacrifice.

"I was taught that a singleton = 3 points extra in dummy. Of course, I will be dummy as I will ask my partner for a suit via a takeout double. Partner shouldn't complain that I am light for my bid. I have a revalued 13 points!

"I will therefore double 1♥ for takeout."

For the record, they bid 4♥ to make 11 tricks.

Partner was broke - this time.

THE LOCKHORNS

BY BUNNY HOEST & JOHN REINER



"I HEARD SO MANY CRICKETS WHEN YOU TOLD THAT JOKE. I THOUGHT THEY'D HAVE TO CALL AN EXTERMINATOR."



"DID IT OCCUR TO YOU THAT WE HAVE LEFTOVERS BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO EAT THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE?"



"IT MUST HAVE BEEN A LONG ENGAGEMENT... THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN SOMEONE SLAM-DUNK A WEDDING BOUQUET."



"KEEP THE PAPER BAG... YOU MIGHT WANT TO BREATHE INTO IT WHEN I TELL YOU WHAT IT COSTS."



"LEROY CALLED IN SICK TO COME TO THE GAME."

Explore This Month

Hello Everyone

Deirdre has asked me to assist you all with some media design input and communication items that may help with further newsletters and posters for up-coming events. A little introduction: I reside in the vineyards of outer Stellenbosch area. My studio has been running independently for over 20 years. I specialise in all types of illustration and have a solid background in corporate design and packaging. My work is linked to the commercial world of advertising and film where I am asked to visualise stage sets and scenes and render storyboards for ads. My work can be viewed on portfoliodedre.co.za. If I am not drawing or designing, you will find me outdoors and mostly in the ocean. My instagram [@dedrefouquet](https://www.instagram.com/dedrefouquet) showcases much of my passion and personal interest and drawing styles.

Looking forward to keeping your bridge pages engaging and exciting.

Warm Regards

Dedré

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