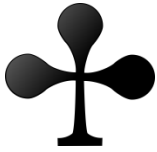


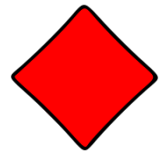


BRIDGE MATTERS



December 2017

Caloundra, Coolumb, and Sunshine Coast Bridge Clubs



CALOUNDRA NEWS



The song was *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* but the men who attended the Caloundra Christmas Party weren't supposed to take it that literally, only two making a valiant attempt to form a balanced ensemble.

But thanks are due to those two and to the ladies for having helped make the party a fun event.

(Chris Miles would have sung but took the photo instead)

CALOUNDRA EVENTS

- Sunday 4th Feb. 4.00 pm
Bridge Introductory Session. An opportunity for members to show their friends and neighbours what bridge is all about.
- Tuesday 13th February-
Series of lessons commences.

CALOUNDRA GOES ECLECTIC

Eclecticism is a conceptual approach that does not hold rigidly to a single paradigm set of assumptions, but instead draws upon multiple theories, styles, or ideas to gain complementary insights into a subject. However, this is often without conventions or rules dictating how or which theories were combined and eclectics are sometimes criticized for lack of consistency in their thinking.

For those of us who are not compulsive Wikipaedi-freaks or pseudo-philosophers, the term 'eclectic' is also used for the practice of choosing only the best results achieved in a series of games for calculation of the score awarded for that series.

In bridge terms: don't we all occasionally have terrible days which we wish could be erased from the system?

In the eclectic play system being adopted, you might be required to play at least 3 out of 4 or 5 sessions:

- * If you play only 3 sessions, they're all counted for your eclectic score, good or bad.
- * If you play 4 sessions your worst result is not counted; or
- * If you play all 5 sessions your two worst results are not counted.

The resulting scores are individual so it is not necessary that you play with the same partner in every session.

To participate, you could play on consecutive Wednesdays, Thursdays or Fridays each month through 2018.

There will be no prizes: it's just a fun variation of play and an opportunity to earn more masterpoints.

COOLUM NEWS

Coolum members Ines Dawes and Patrick Bugler won the 2017 Sunshine Coast Graded Pairs Championships, hosted by Coolum and held at The Sunshine Coast Club

Coolum's new venue is:-

Coolum-Peregian RSL Hall
1906 David Low Way, Coolum
Ph 5446 2588

THE RECORDER

QBA has recently upgraded its recommendations for the presence of recorders at Championship and Congress events, which gives an opportunity to explain some more bridge procedure.

The QBA Regulations describe this role as follows:

The Recorder will be an experienced person to whom players have recourse on complaints or suspicions of improper, unethical or discourteous behaviour. In general, matters which are not strictly the province of the Director. The complaint will be received confidentially and may be discussed with the subjects of the complaint if deemed appropriate.

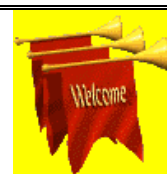
Recorders do not themselves have disciplinary powers but, when the problem is serious, or there is the possibility of ongoing problems, they will raise it with Committee on your behalf. It is then their job to take any necessary action and advise you of the outcome.

This matter is referenced in the Sunshine Coast Club website (Policy on Unacceptable Behaviour) and that Club has a Recorder in the person of Judith Slade.

CALOUNDRA REMINDER

2018 membership fees are due by 31 December.
Home Members- \$48. Away members- \$18
A late fee of \$5.00 will be applied.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Caloundra

Lesley Woods

William Mole

(Apology to Nini Perkins, for naming her as "ni Perkins" in the September edition of Bridge Matters)

Sunshine Coast

Gerrie Boeyen

Marion Bowers

Doug Brotchie

Gabrielle Elich

Tim Hollingworth

Maggie Marsden

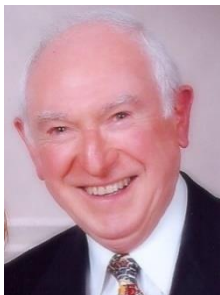
Liset Teis

Lyn & Jim Martin

Pauline and Peter Nevell

MIKE'S MESSAGES

Mike Phillips



THINKING AHEAD

These problems come from Ron Klinger's 2017 Tangalooma Island Resort bridge holiday. They demonstrate the importance to Declarer of thinking ahead before playing to the first trick.

Dlr: N ♠ QJ3
Vul: All ♥ 743
 ♦ 865
 ♣ QJT9

♠ 65	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; width: 100%;"> S </div> </div>	♠ 4
♥ AQJ6		♥ T98
♦ KJ4		♦ T972
♣ A732		♣ K8654

♠ AKT9872
♥ K52
♦ AQ3
♣ --

The bidding:

N	E	S	W
Pass	Pass	1♠	Dbl
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The lead: ♠6. Any other lead against a trump contract is too high a risk.

The play: As South you have 8 tricks on top. The double marks West with the ♥A and ♦K, but the lack of a top club lead makes it less likely that West has ♣AK.

Win trick 1 with the ♠Q in Dummy playing the ♠7 from hand. Play the ♣Q, discarding the ♥2 as West wins with the ace. Win the next spade with the jack and follow with your ♠8. Now play ♣J from Dummy. If East covers trump high, or if East ducks discard another heart. Dummy's last two clubs are

winners and, if needed, the carefully-preserved ♠2 provides the entry via Dummy's ♠3.

The next problem is somewhat different but again requires forethought at trick 1.

Dlr: S ♠ AQ
Vul: All ♥ 9542
 ♦ KQJ87
 ♣ A6

♠ J6432	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; width: 100%;"> S </div> </div>	♠ 975
♥ 6		♥ AJT87
♦ 942		♦ A
♣ KT72		♣ QJ98

♠ KT8
♥ KQ3
♦ T653
♣ 543

The bidding:

N	E	S	W
		Pass	Pass
1♦	1♥	1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass		Pass	

The lead: ♥6 (to Declarer, obviously a singleton). Better to lead partner's good suit than a poor suit of your own, especially without a sure outside entry. (Of course, a club lead would ensure defeat of the contract - if you could find it.)

The play: after ♥6 - 2 - ace, if South follows with the ♥3 East might recognize that there's no future in hearts, and find the killing club switch. You should smoothly drop the ♥Q under the ace. East will take it as KQ doubleton and continue hearts, which you will win with the king or perhaps the nine. Now knock out the ♦A and you have 10 tricks.

The lesson is: never rush to play to trick 1. It pays to stop and think ahead.

DR KABEL HAS THE ANSWER

I've written before about the ace-finding convention invented by Scottish medico Dr Kabel. An opening bid of 3NT asks for specific aces and opener can, if need be, ask next for specific kings. A rare example came up recently, at the Noosa Graded Pairs Congress. As North, the dealer, you pick up these cards:

♠ AKQJT865
♥ K9
♦ A
♣ KQ

This is a once-in-a-blue-moon hand, so you don't want to mess it up. Unless you use cue bids the best you can discover is that South has one ace - but which one? If it's hearts six spades is cold, but if it's clubs you could lose two hearts if South does not hold the 9 of spades as an entry to that ace for a heart pitch.

A few pairs stopped in 4♠ but the majority punted on six and were rewarded when the dummy came down. This was the full deal:

Dir : N
Vul: Nil

♠ AKQJT865
♥ K9
♦ A
♣ KQ

♠ 74
♥ J87
♦ J753
♣ A963

N	
W	E
S	

♠ 92
♥ T32
♦ KQT82
♣ J85

♠ 3
♥ AQ654
♦ 964
♣ T742

Playing Kabel, there was no need to guess. North opened 3NT, South responded 4♥, showing one ace - in hearts - and North happily bid the small slam, making 13 tricks on the natural lead of a diamond.

Full details of the Kabel convention can be found in the June 2017 *Bridge Matters* on the Sunshine Coast website.

MAJOR/ MINOR PENALTY CARDS

This has nothing to do with major and minor suits. The bridge laws concerning penalty cards (PCs) are extensive and complex, so it's understandable if less-experienced players find them confusing. Perhaps this summary will help.

Basically, a card that is prematurely exposed (or named) is a PC, and it may subject the offending side to some restrictions. This can occur - rarely - during the auction period, i.e. while removing cards from the board, or counting the cards onto the table, or just by accidentally dropping a card. Such a card must remain face up on the table until the auction has finished, and is unauthorised information to the partner of the offender. If the offender becomes declarer or dummy the card is returned to hand and is no longer a PC.

Most often, however, a PC arises during play, when a defender leads out of turn, or revokes and then corrects, or holds a card such that his partner could have seen the card's face - even if he didn't see it because he was gazing out of the window at the time. (If only declarer or dummy could see the card it is returned to hand and there is no penalty.)

A single card below honour rank, i.e. 2 to 9, exposed unintentionally, as in playing two cards to a trick, or dropping a card accidentally, is a MINOR PC. Any card of honour rank, or exposed during deliberate play, becomes a MAJOR PC. If a defender has two or more PCs, regardless of value they all become major PCs. A major PC places restrictions on the offending side.

- The PC must be played at the first legal opportunity, whether leading, following suit, discarding or trumping;
- If the offender's partner gains the lead while the PC is on the table, declarer has the right to demand or forbid the lead of the suit of the PC, in which case the PC is returned to hand and no longer restricted, or he can permit any lead, when the PC must remain on the table until legally required to be played.

A minor PC is not subject to these restrictions. It need not be played at the first opportunity and declarer has no rights against the offender's

partner. The only restriction on the offender is that if he chooses to play a card of the PC suit that is below a ten, it must be the PC.

There are additional laws, which the director would explain, covering the situation when there are more than one PC on the table. Remember, a PC is always unauthorised information to the offender's partner, but not to the declarer.

The declarer is also not subject to these laws. If he revokes he is allowed to correct immediately and simply return the wrong card to his hand.

The important thing is that when a card is illegally exposed play must stop and the director must be called. The director will explain the different parties' rights and responsibilities, and will stay to ensure that correct procedure is followed.

BRIDGE TRAVEL

RUSSIA WITH ANDY HUNG

Pauline Clayton

Tossing down vodka shots in a Saint Petersburg bar was not how I expected a series of Andy Hung bridge lessons to start. But there I was after spotting his 10-day Russian bridge holiday brochure on the club notice board.

Afternoons were mostly occupied with bridge but mornings were for exploring with Andy and a Russian guide, 33 year old Alexandra Zvereva, from the Russian Government's Committee of Tourism Development.



We stayed in the four-star Holiday Inn, which was comfortable with heated bathroom flooring and a great bath. Our evenings were dinner at local restaurants (not MacDonald's) and one evening at the Mikhailovsky Theatre for a performance of the ballet Don Quixote, which included two intervals with caviar and a swish of vodka.

We were a diverse but manageable group of 19 from various Australian clubs, and with a range of bridge experience, from novice to directors. Marina Noud and Tania Perry, sisters from Brisbane who had had just eight lessons were a little overwhelmed by the classes, but great ladies and major assets to the group as they spoke fluent Russian. Andy arranged for them to have a one-to-one private lesson.

At the other end of the bridge scale Betty Mill, (Melbourne), at 86 years of age, a master player who teamed up with the youngest (who joined the group from Germany) 14 year-old Emil Langer who has already competed in Europe and more recently in Canberra at Youth Week.

Fair to say most wrapped an extended European holiday around Andy's bridge tour, with tours of Moscow the UK, Dubai or Sweden, being part of the trips. I spent two weeks in London, enjoying glorious late September weather, and after Andy's Russian adventure caught the train (with two other players) to Moscow and then home with a four day stop-over in Shanghai.

Back home, have since played bridge with my Saint Petersburg partner, Angela Robertson (aka Demarr) a director with the Surfers Paradise club, who brought her 15 year old grandson, William (a competing ballroom dancer) on the trip. He found plenty to do, including a Russian dance class, while we played bridge.

Despite having been on organised trips with small teams of journalists, I had reservations in joining a group of strangers in a strange land but I need not have worried.

Andy Hung is not only an Australian bridge champion; he is a great organiser and stays calm under even the slightest pressure. Not that there was any, with the exception of two ladies in the

group moving out of sight in the depths of the underground railway. Alexandra is an excellent guide, friendly, informative, and, as an arts graduate, bought so many of the works we saw alive.

As for Saint Petersburg, purpose built by Romanov Tsar, Peter the Great, 10 days is hardly long enough to explore the 100 heavily gilded palaces and castles, the cathedrals, art galleries, parks and gardens. The famous Winter Palace, home to the Russian monarchs and now The Hermitage Museum, is not only a breathtaking building but the works of art contained therein are priceless.

We could explore at leisure and surprisingly, maybe because of the time of year, it was not crowded.

Peter the Great had visited Amsterdam and so this city has canals and 300 bridges. We took a canal boat trip gaining a different view of just part of this, the second largest city in Russia.

The day we visited the Peter and Paul prison fortress was Russian leader Putin's birthday and so we watched a small military parade attending the daily cannon shot from the fortress parapet.

This famed island fortress is also the home of a remarkable, gilded spired cathedral, where most all the Romanov rulers are interred. The white marble caskets shine from the hand-cut crystals of dozens of chandeliers. The walls and ceilings are works of art in themselves.

We did not have to put our hands in our pocket at any time during the holiday, except if we chose to tip. Andy even carried a bag of subway tokens for us. A bus or cab was at the front door of the hotel whenever we stepped out.

For me, the tour was not just good: it was great.

Editor's Note- Peter Bishop

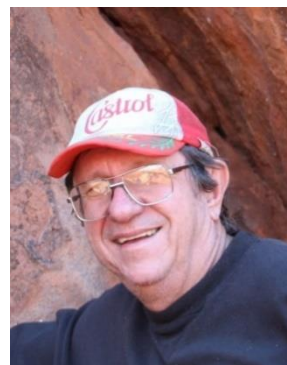
Most tourists wouldn't think of subways as an essential part of their travel experience but in St Petersburg, while the trains are strictly utilitarian, the stations are amazing.

The first surprise is their depth, taking several minutes on more than one escalator to get to the deepest at 86 metres. There's probably an engineering reason for that: if they'd built the tunnels in the city's waterlogged soil the streets and grand buildings would have been destabilised so they had to find rock.

The even more remarkable feature of the stations is that they mirror the palaces above, with marble everywhere and lighting by glistening chandeliers.

KEN'S CHESTNUT

Ken Dawson



PLAY THE CARD WHICH YOU ARE KNOWN TO HOLD.

The most obvious example of this occurs when you are declarer. You accidentally drop the heart ten and the director correctly tells you to put it back in your hand. The defence now know that you hold that card. Don't play the Jack or the nine before you play the ten.

Here's another example:-

J974

KT82

A3

Q65

Declarer plays small to dummy's 9 and partner's ace. Declarer now knows that you hold the Ten. Declarer regains the lead and leads small towards J74. You should insert the ten. Declarer may now believe that the suit is breaking 3-3 and attempt to establish the 4th trick in the suit. If you had inserted the 8 and the Jack had won the trick, he would know that you hold KT and abandon the suit.

♠AK92

♥QJ7

♦J96

♣986

♠853

♥T85

♦A8743

♣A3

♠QT

♥642

♦T5

♣KQJT72

♠J764

♥AK93

♦KQ2

♣54

After East makes a jump overcall of 3C, South becomes declarer in 4S. The defence begins with CA, CK and CQ. Declarer ruffs with the SJ which holds the trick. East is now marked with the SQ. Declarer plays S4 to the Ace on which East drops the SQ. Will declarer play this as a singleton? I think so. Now, he finesses into East's ST for the setting trick. If he had dropped the ST under the SA, declarer will play to drop the QT doubleton, the S9 calmly collecting the S8.

KEN'S KONUNDRUM # 9

♣QJ9642

♣A73

♣K84

♣T

After opening one-of-a-suit, South became declarer in 3NT. There was one outside entry. In the mid-game, declarer led his ♣T. Both players ducked and that was declarer's 9th trick.

So, whose fault was this debacle?

West reasoned that, in such a situation, he will be giving count. So, East knows that West has three clubs and the exact layout. So, it is OK to take the first club.

East countered that West would have still ducked with this layout:-

♣QJ9642

♣A3

♣K84

♣T7

This is because taking the first club would allow the king to be driven out without wasting that precious outside entry in dummy.

Quite so. There is *no* right answer to this problem.

However, there are a few strategies involved :-

- On an ethical note, West should not need a big think before playing ♣3. It is the mid-game and

West has had plenty of time to observe dummy and decide his carding in advance.

- Declarer should make sure that he is almost home before making this play. Do it too early and the defence may have time to recover and get their club tricks when they get the lead in another suit. Do it too late and the defence will realize that two club tricks will defeat the contract.

- Don't waste East's energy on a post-mortem of this hand during playtime. You will just drain his batteries for a board that has already gone. Do it after play.

PARTNER, I KNOW I TOLD YOU TO COUNT BUT:

There are 365 spots on a pack of cards, representing the 365 days of the year. Then if you count the number of cards in a pack, you will find 52, representing the 52 weeks in the year; whilst, if you count the number of suits in a pack, you will find four, representing the four seasons of the year, and if you count the number of picture cards in the pack, you will find three of each of the four suits, making 12, which represents the 12 months in the year and, if you count the number of tricks in the pack, you will find 13 which represents the thirteen weeks in a quarter.

Kay Webber



Please contact
the Bridge
Matters Editor:



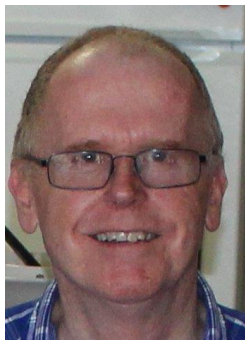
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with:
CONTRIBUTIONS
or
BRIDGE QUERIES,
for referral to our
panel of experts

THE BUSCH BASCH

Peter Busch



APPEALS

The director of a bridge session is required to make rulings after infractions by any player. Their ruling needs to be followed at the time, but any player dissatisfied with a director's ruling can request an appeal. This applies at all levels, from international congresses right down to club sessions.

In Pairs events, both members of the partnership must agree to the matter going to appeal, and in Teams events, it requires the concurrence of the player and the team captain.

The rules of the congress or club specify the deadline for lodging an appeal. If there is no such decision, the laws of bridge state that an appeal must be lodged "within 30 minutes after the official score has been made available for inspection".

To hear an appeal, an Appeals Committee (AC) is formed, comprising an odd number of people (usually 3), who will usually have a reasonable bridge knowledge and who may or may not be versed in the laws of bridge. One of their number will be the Appeals Committee Chairman.

An AC cannot overrule the director on a point of law, but can do so on a point of fact. For example, if the appellants felt that the director awarded an incorrect number of tricks after a revoke, that's a point of law, and the AC cannot overrule this decision. However, if they felt the director had erred in their ruling, they would recommend to the director that the decision be changed.

Two common examples of a ruling on a "point of fact", where the AC can make a ruling, are misinformation or use of unauthorised information.

Most appeals are based on one of these two issues.

An appeal is heard at the first practical opportunity. This might be in between matches at a congress, or it might be at the end of a club session

Most times, an Appeals form is made out before the hearing, outlining the facts, and with provision for both parties to state their case in writing. In the hearing, the AC will first listen to what the director has to say, then will call on the parties, either separately or together, so they can state their case. The AC members will question of the parties as necessary as part of this process. After this, the AC members will discuss the case among themselves before reaching a decision. The decision is then conveyed to the director who in turn advises the parties.

AC's have the power to penalise the appellant if they feel the appeal was without merit, referred to as "frivolous". This penalty usually takes the form of a reduction in the appellant's score (maybe half a top, or 3 imps), but appellants may also be required to lodge a monetary deposit before the appeal which can be forfeited if it is decided that the appeal was frivolous.

Major events often have a team of Appeals Advisors available, who are available to advise the players on the issue under contention before formally going to appeal. The Appeals Advisor will tell the player if they believe the matter is worth appealing. The player may choose to disregard the advice of the Appeals Advisor, but the Appeals Committee is more likely to impose a frivolous appeal penalty in such cases. At local congresses and even club events, the director may suggest a prospective appellant speak to another experienced but disinterested player in the capacity of Appeals Advisor before proceeding to a formal appeal.

LIES, DAMNED LIES, AND STATISTICS

Waiver- Peter Bishop denies responsibility

In playing bridge, you should be aware that you have no control over the scores you achieve in playing approximately one third of boards. Being *duplicate* bridge, the results achieved by the whole room can be skewed by a mistake or stroke of good fortune at just one table.

So there's no point worrying about those bad results: you just need to improve your own bidding, play, and defence by 50% to compensate.

If that seems a tall order you could perhaps take Paul Marston's advice and concentrate on improving your defence. In his article in *The Australian* of October 14th he offered the opinion that you can lose far more tricks in defence than in declarer play and his wisdom of November 18th was that, if defenders pay close attention to the bidding, they can usually get a good idea of how the play will go, their opponents being compelled to give away valuable information.

Readers might be interested in the following statistics extracted from system cards by the Editor (Keith Ogborn) of the Daily Bulletins of the 2017 Australian National Championships, played in Canberra in July.

Interstate Teams Systems—Slam Methods

Blackwood

Nobody plays standard Blackwood any more but Roman Key Card is the weapon of choice for around 95 per cent of the players in the interstate.

But which one? The overall figures show that the room is fairly evenly divided between 1430 and 3041.

1430 does have a slight edge in the numbers but this is because very few Youth players play anything else.

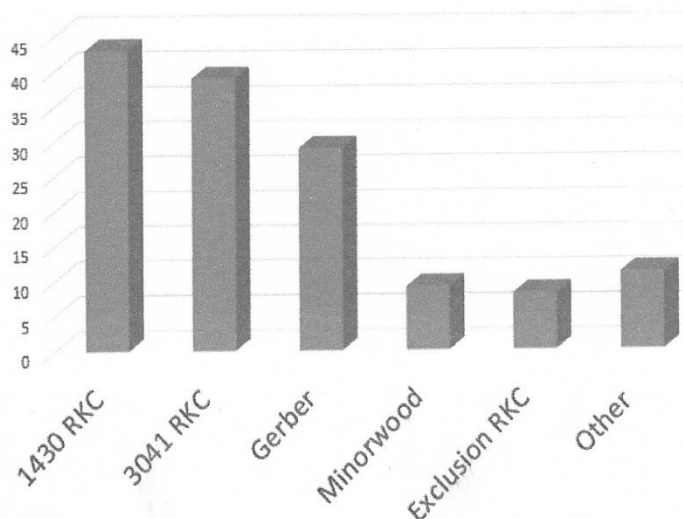
In the Women's and Senior's, 3041 is ahead by a factor of two to one and the split in the Open is quite even.

One pairs plays 1430 and 3041 depending on whether there are in a trump or no-trump auction.

Gerber is still popular, almost always in addition to Roman KC and over a NT—and is probably more common here than in a lot of club level bridge. Gerber is played significantly more often in the Open and Women's than in the Youth or Seniors'.

Minorwood and Exclusion RKC are very much a minority. The main methods in the 'Other' category are Turbo, Kickback, and Gerber variations, such as Cro-Gerber.

Slam Methods - All Teams



Bridge in Greenland

Every editor needs a bit of filler when the contributions are a bit slow in arriving and there is no breaking news. It's also good to have a few pictures to break up the text.

It occurred to me that the requirement for the interstate players to lodge their system cards online created an opportunity to tick both of those boxes.

While the numbers are not enough to be representative of what top players are playing generally, it is an interesting snapshot of what is being played at the top level.

It also gives us a chance to test some stereotypes. For example, how many of our revered seniors have stayed loyal to the Culbertson they learned in the 1940s? Is it possible to find a Youth pair that plays a natural system?

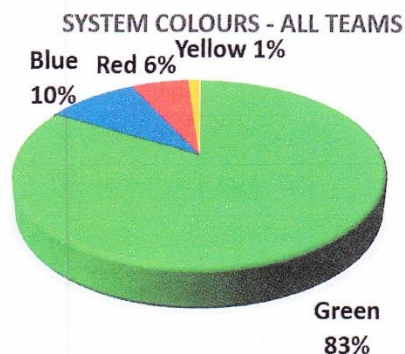
The editor is also aware that for every pair that is here, there are several at home wondering how it happened that they missed out. The answer, as every Thinking Person knows, is that those who succeeded must have had more gadgets or better gadgets. So, hopefully, these articles will be of service for the next attempt.

As a first step we look at basic systems. In later issues, as space permits, we will look at the gadgets.

Mr Natural rules!

When it comes to system colour, it is clear that we are very much in Green territory. Complex systems are very much the exception at this ANC. There is one Yellow Forcing Pass system being played in the Open, but only when not vulnerable.

There are two red systems in the Open and in the Seniors' and one in the Women's. The Youth is almost entirely green, with two pairs playing blue systems.



It's a pretty standard world

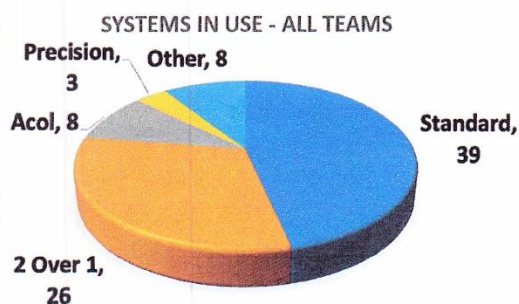
Overall, standard is a fairly clear winner but there is a lot of variation between the categories.

Two over one is more popular than standard in the Open, whereas only two pairs are playing it in the Seniors'.

The Seniors' is the broadest church when it comes to the main systems, having both Acol and Precision players in addition to the two over one and standard. However, disappointingly, there is no Culbertson to be found.

There is no Precision but more Acol in the Women's and only Standard and 2/1 in the Youth. (The Youth systems are more uniform because two teams play one system for all pairs.)

In terms of the "other" category, one pair is playing symmetric relay but for the most part the other systems tend to be Acolish standard or standard with multi 1C or 1D.



Interstate Teams Systems—Weak Twos

Many Paths

There is not the same level of agreement around two level bids that there is about systems. With the occasional exception, two-level suit bids are weak but there are many different approaches.

The diagram opposite shows the distribution between what I have called the standard **multi** (defined as 2C strong, 2D showing strong balanced or a weak major) and 2H and 2S as two-suited bids), the **multi without the strong balanced option** in 2D, **weak two** (where 2D, 2H and 2S) show a weak 5 or 6 card suit, and others.

The 'other' category mostly consists of precision-style bids and systems where the Diamond call also has multiple meanings.

The overall picture of the types of opening twos in use hides a lot of variation between the categories. The standard multi is relatively uncommon in the open, non-existent in the youth but almost two-thirds of the women's systems. More than two-thirds of the youth systems are weak twos. 'Other' accounts for just over 40 per cent of the systems in the seniors with the remainder fairly equally divided between the other three categories.

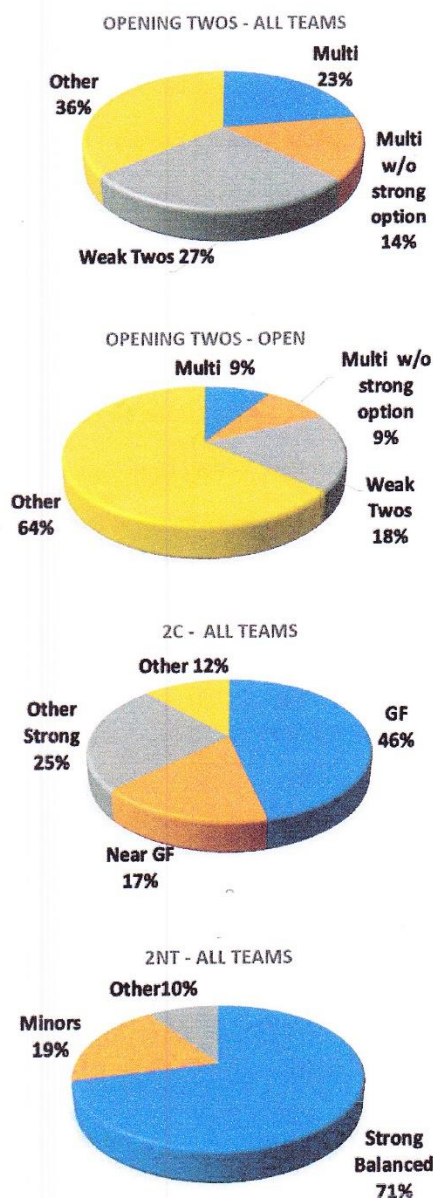
Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom—2C

For the purposes of the chart, GF includes bids that show a game force in a suit or 23+ balanced. Near GF includes hands that can have 9 playing tricks or 22 points balanced.

As the chart shows, nine out of ten players have 2C as a strong artificial bid. However, within that there is enormous variation as to the range. There are twelve different approaches in the Open, fifteen in the Women's and fifteen in the Seniors'.

2NT- Victory of the Strong

The old favourite of 2NT showing both minors is a very much a minority (no pun intended) option. Around two thirds of the field are showing a strong balanced hand. The range varies but is nowhere near the variation that we saw in the 2C.



Interstate Systems—Weak Twos *Continued*

Opening Two of a Major

Once we get to the majors there is far less variation between the different categories than for the other two-level bids. About half the time, the opponents will be showing a weak heart or spade suit.

A lot of the time, particularly when non-vulnerable, they may have a five card suit. A number of the Open pairs will also open at the two-level with a five card suit in first or third position.

When 2H shows a two-suited hand, they are divided almost equally between those who are showing Hearts and another and those showing Hearts and a minor. Does anybody have any strong views that one is better than the other?

When there is an opening 2S (not a single suit), however, the odds are three to one that it is spades and a minor.

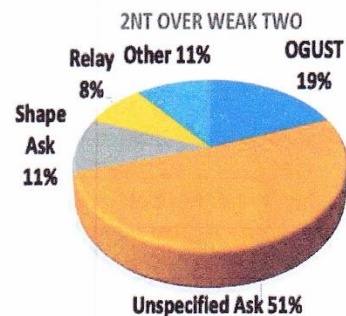
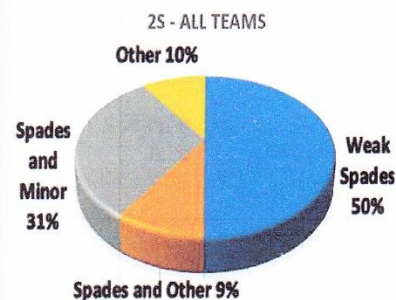
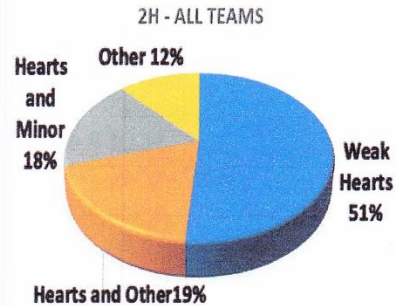
The 'other' category primarily consists of CRO or other two-suited bids but is relatively small. As is the case with basic systems, the general picture we get with weak twos, is a general coalescence around three or four standard approaches.

2NT Inquiry

The system cards are not so helpful in showing the meaning of 2NT over a weak two as about half the cards only specify that it is an inquiry or strong inquiry. Most of the systems specifically reporting OGUST come from the Youth.

Similarly, relays may be shape or strength ask or both but this information is not required on the cards. The relatively small 'other' category mainly consists of bids that describe the 2NT bidder's hand—either a natural bid or showing support.

Where the nature of the shape ask is specified, it is almost always asking for a shortage.



Interstate Teams Systems—1 NT

Point Range : The Old King Is Dead

If you learned standard in a particular era, it was 16-18. Later, daringly, you broadened it out to 15-18, which created spaces for range-finding gadgets. Pretty much all gone now.

15-17 dominates with no close second. The weak NT is hanging on mainly because of Acol but some pairs also play standardish with a weak NT.

Asking: Stayman and Others

In contrast, when it comes to inquiries, people seem to have mostly not abandoned traditional methods.

Three out of four pairs play stayman although it is possible that there is hidden variation in there. An occasional card refers to 'simple stayman' but most do not specify.

The five card inquiries are similarly mostly unspecified.

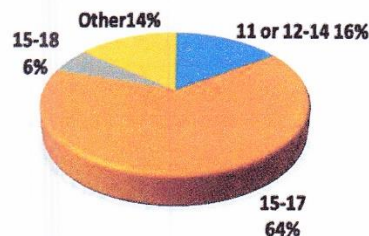
5 Card Majors

About three-quarters of the pairs can open 1NT with a five-card major although there is variation between the categories.

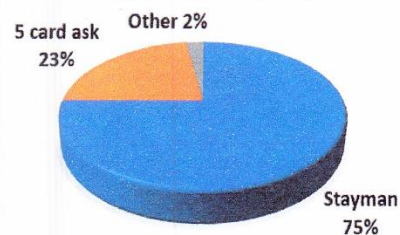
Almost all pairs in the women's and youth use this approach compared with about two-thirds in the open and seniors'.

Of those who do open 1NT with a five-card major, only about a quarter appear to use a system to identify a five-card suit, at least on the first round of bidding.

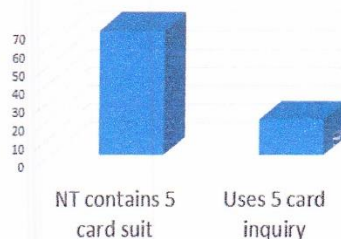
NT OPENING - ALL TEAMS



NT INQUIRY - ALL TEAMS



NT with 5 card major



Is this man affecting your bridge?

The Editor knows that many bridge players do not have a lot of time for light reading. They may, therefore, have missed an interesting paper that was presented to the 33rd International Conference on Machine Learning, Workshop on Data-Efficient Machine Learning, in New York City last year (no I am not making this up).

The paper by Jonathan Falk and Andrew Gelman, from the Statistics Department of Columbia University, is entitled "NO TRUMP! A statistical exercise in priming". The paper was written at the time of Donald Trump's candidacy and the authors wanted to test whether this might have irrationally changed the behaviour of elite bridge players.

For reasons that are specific to America and which we do not discuss here, they assume that bridge players are not normally Trump supporters. The hypothesis they wished to test, therefore, was that declarers would be more determined to make no-trump contracts; and that defenders, correspondingly, would not really have their heart in defeating the contract and would do worse.

The main proof that the hypothesis was correct came from analyzing the proportion of successfully bid and made no-trump hands at two Vanderbilt Tournaments—one in 1999 and one in 2015 when his candidacy was known.

The figures are as follows:

	Vanderbilt 2015	Vanderbilt 1999
Hands Played	781	205
Percentage Played in No Trump E(NT)	28.81%	25.98%
Percentage of "Made" No Trump Hands E(NTxM)	19.97%	12.60%
Conditional Success Rate E(M NT)	69.32%	48.50%

The rate of bidding and success in no-trump contracts has in fact increased as the hypothesis suggests. There is then a whole bunch of technical stuff about one-sided p-values and t-tests which show that the results are statistically significant and undeniably prove the hypothesis that Trump is affecting the play.

The writers say that they expect this effect to become more significant as his profile increases and foreshadow an intention to build their careers with further papers on this subject. There has, however, been no follow-up to date, and so, while not wishing to impact on their futures (I am retired and in no need of further fame), we have done some further research on results in this year's interstate to test the impact now that Trump has indeed become President.

We looked at 1NT, 2NT and 3NT (we got tired before getting to 6NT and 7NT but they will not have a significant impact on the stats). Our research showed that these contracts made 74.02 per cent of the time, a considerable increase on the 2015 Vanderbilt results as the hypothesis would predict. 3NT contracts made 75.38 per cent of the time, 2NT 64.47 per cent, and 1NT 74.44 per cent.

The footnote under the title of the paper says 'please do not tell our employers that we spent any time doing this' and it is in fact a great spoof of dodgy claims about statistical validity and there are plenty of funny parts not quoted here. The full paper is at http://www.stat.columbia.edu/~gelman/research/unpublished/notrump_falk_gelman_icml.pdf

