

Whangarei Bridge Club

February 2023

Off And Running



The Club has been open in January for Holiday Bridge on Monday and Friday mornings. Holiday Bridge is just for fun so whilst we play by normal duplicate rules, there are no trophies on offer. Nevertheless, we got a superb turn out with between 18 and 22 pairs coming to play for every session.



We are now playing the normal calendar events starting with Lavender Pairs on Wednesday 1 February. A quick look at the car park shows we have a good attendance.

February and March Schedule

	February	March
Monday Morning	Amber Pairs	Tait Real Estate Pairs
Tuesday Evening	Valentine Pairs	Mad Hatter Pairs
Wednesday Morning	Lavender Pairs	Pairs Championship & Bow Cup
Thursday Evening	Barrells Pairs	Bliss Cup
Friday Morning	Sienna Pairs	Marsden Cup

Morning sessions start at 10.30. Please be seated by 10.25. There will be a lunch break near 12 noon.

Evening sessions start at 7.00 pm. Please be seated by 6.55.

Spot the Convention



And they sold their birth right ...

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A View From The Bridge



Tel Hudson
Committee Member

Despite being a junior player, I have played in many places. Nevertheless, the first time I ever had lessons was at Richard's classes a couple of years ago. Before then it was all guesswork.

Let's go back a few (*Um! that is 55.*) years when I was at school. The only card game we were allowed to play was Bridge. One lunch hour we were taught how to play. Actually, it only took half an hour – Bridge is quite a simple game. Then as we started, we were given some bidding advice.

I still remember it. "Count your points and open the bidding with 13 points. If your partner bids, you can reply with 6. Enjoy!" The important thing is that last word, 'Enjoy!' And we certainly enjoyed ourselves, playing a couple of rubbers most lunchtimes.

Since then, I've visited various clubs and picked up bits and pieces of technique. Richard's lessons gave a firm basis on which Lee built with some intensive tuition so now I'm proud to say, "Junior but learning!"

I'm looking forward to lessons with Stan Abrahams. That is the next step.

Behind the scenes

Just a short note to let you know what goes on behind the scenes so that members can turn up at the Club, play bridge, score on tablets and get results online as soon as the session has finished.

First our programme needs to be set up. This usually takes approximately 2-3 months. It's finalised by the middle of November so that members' books can be printed by the Christmas break. Our programme is then entered into the NZ Bridge scoring program.

Each session is entered in the BOS program (Bridge Organising Software – the computer program that runs the tablets) and deal-files are generated. These deals are attached to the scoring program.

At the start of each week, one of our dealing team deals the boards. This team works on a 6-week roster and deals a week's worth of boards at a time. We have a dealing machine that reads generated deal-files and sorts the cards into the slots in the board.



Dealing Machine

The human dealer simply selects the correct computer file and keeps the machine supplied with packs of cards and empty boards.

When you turn up to play bridge the Director decides on the movement to be used. This mainly depends on the number of tables. Some of our player either cannot move or find it difficult to move around the room. (We also have one member who must move after each round. She seizes up if she sits too long.) [*I know that feeling only too well.* Ed.] The Director must take this into account when setting up the movement. That is why we ask you to be seated 5 minutes before the start time. The scorer (normally the Director) enters the movement into the scoring program and starts the tablets.

At the end of play the scorer uploads the players' names and results from BOS to the scoring program and generates results which are sent to the web so that you can access them at home. At the same time, the tablets are turned off and plugged in so that they are charged for the next session. The boards are returned to the box which is taken to the office to be dealt for further sessions. It is helpful for dealers if boards are put back in the box in order. The final task is to send the results to the Advocate who publish them on Tuesday each week in the sports section of the paper.

Quote for today: *If games such as Gin Rummy and Poker may be considered the mental equivalent of taking the dog for a walk, modern Bridge must be regarded as more like a brisk work-out in the gym.*
Terence Reese + Albert Dormer

Computer Generated Deals

We generate our deals using a computer and deal the cards with a machine. We don't have to do this. Some members may remember when we used to deal the cards manually. The first task at the start of each session was to take the cards out of each board, shuffle, deal the hands and put them back in the board.

This was unsatisfactory because, to be brutally honest, most people can't shuffle cards. Playing bridge naturally sorts the cards into tricks. After a quick shuffle, the card order will be different but they will still be roughly sorted. This means that when you deal them the hands will have a flat distribution.

That is fine if you like balanced hands and 4-4 trump suits where the outstanding cards break evenly but it's boring. If you have 8 trumps you expect the other cards to split 3-2 68% of the time. That is high but it isn't 100%. It is the occasional 4-1 and 5-0 splits that separate experts from the rest of us. And let's be honest we all love the occasional 7-card suit.

A Gentle Reminder

Please be on time for the Bridge sessions. Ideally everyone should be seated at least 5 minutes before the session starts. (It allows the Director time to set up the movement.) If you are going to be late (or very tight to the start time) make sure someone knows. Sessions start on time. If you arrive after the start, you may be sent home.

When The Session Is Finished

It is important that the tablets are completely and correctly turned off before being put on charge. If a tablet is left in a limbo state then it is awkward for the players in the next session. They have to clear down the tablet and make it ready to accept players' numbers. Even if you know how to do this, it's a nuisance when you want to start play.

Of course, if the players don't know how to reset the tablet, they'll call the Director. The Director has quite enough to do at start of play without being distracted by zombie tablets.

If you don't know how to turn off tablets, just leave them on the table. The person who collects them will complete the shutdown procedure.

Finally. Please leave your table clean and tidy including removing the used bidding pad slips. And please! Wash up your coffee cups.



Help! They've just doubled our 1NT.

1NT is an important opening bid in the NZ Bridge bidding system. The rule is, "If you can bid 1NT then that is what you must bid." Typically, you get a 1NT hand 8.1% of the time – that is roughly one in twelve. This bid is a constructive pre-empt. It's a pre-empt because you cannot make the contract without help from your partner and it prevents the opposition from opening with a one bid. However, unlike a weak 2 or 3 bid it's constructive because it leaves the way open for partner to bid on with a suitable hand. There are special conventions and many books have been written on how you can bid after your partner's 1NT.

This article assumes a weak (12 – 14 point) No Trump.



The trouble with 1NT is that it often goes off. If neither partner has a stop in one of the suits, the other side may be able to run the first 5 or 6 tricks. You don't mind going one off because 100 points (vulnerable) is less than 110 points that the opposition could score for 2♥ or 3♣. A double is a different matter. If you go 2 or 3 off doubled then it is a disaster.

What should you do?

If you have 9 or more points, then your partnership has at least 21 points. That should be enough to make your contract and 1NT× probably gives you the best possible score. Unless you have a good reason, such as a long suit and a void, you should pass.

With 7 or fewer points, the contract is likely to fail and you'll want to run for cover. 8 points is decision time. If your hand is good with some 9s and 10s, you pass. But

if you don't have any intermediates and your points are in short suits you may want to run. There are three basic escape strategies. Whilst these systems are designed to get you out of a hole, it is important to remember that these are emergency measures. If the opposition intervene then don't compete. Let them have the contract. The 1NT bid has already made it difficult for them to reach the best spot. Let the pre-empt do its work.

3 Strategies

1. The simplest way is to call your longest suit. If you have a 5-card suit then you are guaranteed at least a 7-card fit. Making 8 tricks in a suit may be easier than 7 tricks in No Trumps and there is a good chance that you won't be doubled. Redouble has a special meaning. It says, "Bid your 4-card suit." It's called an SOS redouble and you call it when you are completely balanced.
2. The second way is to bid ignoring the double. 2♣ still means Stayman with 2♦ and 2♥ being Transfers. Unfortunately, you can't escape to 2 of a minor. To cover this, Redouble tells the opener to bid 2♣. The responder passes or corrects to 2♦.
3. The third way is the one recommended by NZ Bridge. These are the responder's bids.
 - ×× Responder has a single suited hand (at least 5 cards). Opener bids 2♣. Responder will pass if the long suit is Clubs. Otherwise, Responder bids the long suit.
 - 2♣ Responder has Clubs and another suit (4/4). Opener passes with 3+ Clubs or bids Diamonds with a doubleton Club.
 - 2♦ Shows Diamonds and a higher suit. Opener passes with 3+ Diamonds or bids Hearts.
 - 2♥ Shows 4/4 in the majors. Opener accepts 2♥ or corrects to 2♣.
 - 2♠ Shows a single suited hand with at least 5 Spades.

These systems are incompatible – the bids have different meanings – so you can't mix and match. It is important to agree with your partner which system (if any) you are playing.

Conclusion

Each of the three systems has good points. The first strategy is simple and so is not likely to go wrong. It is so simple that most people wouldn't bother discussing it with their partner. Except! Redouble does NOT mean, "We are going to make this contract." (In modern systems redouble is invariably a forcing bid.) The second system relies on your normal bids and so is easy to remember but you must agree on the meaning of redouble. The third system is more complicated but it guarantees that you will have at least 7 trump cards – either 4-3 or 5-2.

One final point, the fewer points you have the more important it is to run. With 7 points, you are looking at going one off (you might even make it) but if you only have 2 points you are going off screaming.

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Lessons – 1 Beginners

It's that time of year again. Richard is presenting a course of 10 lessons for beginners. There are two sets. One set is on Monday Evenings 7pm to 9 pm. The other set is on Tuesday Mornings 10am to 12 noon. It is expected that each Monday lesson will be repeated on Tuesday

The curriculum is the basic NZ Bridge convention. This system condenses bidding down to a few simple rules that cover every case. It is ideal for giving debutants confidence. If you know someone who is interested in having a go at Bridge, these lesson are a brilliant introduction.

New players are charged for the lessons and this gives them membership of the Club for this year. Current club members are welcome to attend free of charge. Last year's graduates may find taking the lessons very useful. It is amazing what you pick up the second time round.

The first sessions will be on Monday 13 March and Tuesday 14 March. For more information check the Club notice board or phone Richard on 09 556 1226.

Lessons – 2 Improvers

Stanley Abrahams has agreed to host a series of lessons aimed at more experienced players. The basic system uses 4½ card majors. (4♥ and 5♠) Stan has said that he is prepared to train any club member.

The basic lessons give rules but these lessons will give guidelines. Whilst the guidelines are simple they rely on the player to use skill and expertise to apply them. In consequence we suggest that these lessons are not suitable for last year's graduates. Learning a new system before you are thoroughly conversant with your current system is a recipe for confusion.

The lessons will be held at 10 o'clock on Saturday mornings. The dates have not been decided. When they are determined they will be shown on the Club's noticeboard and website (as well as in the Newsletter).

Spot the Convention



Pottage. This is a defence against INT named after Julian Pottage. It is very similar to the conventions devised by Mike Cappelletti and Fred Hamilton

And he sold his birth right for a mess of pottage.

Water Damage to Club

The rain damage to the club room ceiling has been reported to our insurers and will be repaired. Whilst the repairs are actually being made the club room will not be usable and we will have to cancel one or more sessions. Unfortunately, builders are exceptionally busy right now and will remain so for some time. This means that we may have to cancel a session at short notice.

Annual Subs

These have been held at \$70 for a number of years and we are hoping to hold them at this price next year. If you pay before the second week of February you get a \$10 discount.

Neil, our Treasurer, has put in a request. If you pay by direct Bank transfer then please state that these are subs in the reference and put your player number in the code. It makes his job much easier.

Plums

Have you noticed the excellent jams and chutneys on the table near the door. These are the work of Debbie Schicker and very welcome they are too. Well, to make jam you need fruit and Debbie has put out a request for plums. If anyone has a plum tree and has a



surplus, we have a good home for them. Debbie's phone number is in the book or you can email me on WhangareiBridgeNews@gmx.com.

Coffee

At the AGM a heartfelt plea was made for some decent coffee. To meet this need, a drum of Moccona Classic has been donated to the Club. Do help yourself. There three types of people. Some people go to huge lengths for good cup. [*The author of this piece used to drive 80km to his favourite Coffee House. Ed*] others don't care and a third group likes good coffee but won't make too much of a fuss.

It isn't practicable for the Club to provide real coffee. So the question arises, "What constitutes decent instant coffee?" An opinion was stated that Club Members want Nescafé and nothing else. An alternative view advocated Moccona. Make your views known even if they are, "Who cares?"

Write to WhangareiBridgeNews@gmx.com