

Whangarei Bridge Club



March 2023

It's Lesson Time!



In addition to our Beginners' lessons (see Back Page), Stan Abrahams has started an advanced course. The first session was not a formal lesson; it was more like a seminar.

The main topic was showing count through your discards. The below hand shows the principle. Declarer (South) is in a No Trump contract and has to make 4 tricks in the shown suit. Dummy (North) has no other entries. You are West and during play you can only see yours and Dummy's cards.

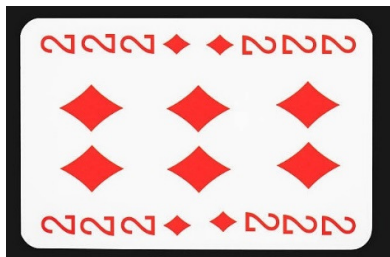
	N	KQJT9	
W	A84		E 73
	S	652	

South leads a low card. If you play your Ace then when South wins a trick, another low card is played and Dummy makes 4 tricks. But if you lose the first two tricks and win the third, Dummy's remaining cards are inaccessible. So how do you know to hold up 2 tricks?

East plays a 7 on the first trick and the 3 on the second. High-Low says, "I have an even number of cards." West can deduce that East has 2 cards and therefore South must have three.

With 3 cards, East would have played low then high. West seeing 2 then 7 knows East has an odd number of cards. That must be 3 cards, hence South had a doubleton. Consequently, West can safely play his Ace on the second round making an extra trick.

Spot the Convention



Answer on Back Page

A View From The Bridge



Tel Hudson - Committee Member

Last month I wrote that I have played Bridge in many locations. One of my proud boasts is that I have been beaten by better players than most of our members have ever seen.

But Whangarei Bridge Club has to be the friendliest club I've played. The first time I played after lessons, Janice welcomed and introduced me. (She also gave me a one session immunity from penalty doubles. 😊) Then every pair we met that session echoed Janice's welcome. That was just a little bit special. Thank you.

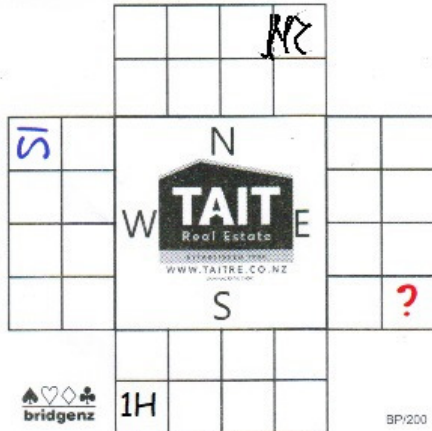
There is just one thing though. And that is the noise levels. As each round finishes, players naturally chat to partner and opposition. Unfortunately, there are often other people still playing. We like folks enjoying themselves but could you keep the noise down. Just speak a little more quietly.

However, there are two times when people should not be talking. That is during the announcements at the start of the session and when the Director addresses the room. So, when Janice rings the bell or the Director calls, "Attention!" please be silent.

Decoding The Hieroglyphics

Advice from Richard Bland, National Director

We've all come across it, "What is that bid you've just written?" Many of us have also come across the case where the next player makes an overcall without asking, only to hear "Director, Insufficient Bid!"



What was read as 2H was purportedly 3H or 2NT.

Traditionally, Directors have sided with the scribbler – ruled an insufficient bid and applied the Insufficient Bid Law. The ‘offender’ feels, quite justifiably in most cases, offended.

Over the last couple of years, National Directors have begun to look at the scribble more carefully from the point of view of the opposition, and, if the overcaller’s misinterpretation is reasonable, have dealt with it as a case of the unclear writing being Misinformation. The overcaller may then correct or withdraw their bid without penalty. Information from any change of bid is authorized to the overcalling side and unauthorized to the scribblers. This puts the onus on players to print their bids clearly and unambiguously.

This way of looking at such bids will gradually filter down to club level. In your own interests, make sure your bids are neat and within the boxes on the bidding pad.

Simplified extract from Law 27 Insufficient Bid
 If an insufficient bid is not accepted, it must be corrected by the substitution of a legal call but not a double. If the insufficient bid is corrected by a comparable call the auction proceeds without further rectification otherwise offender’s partner must pass for the rest of the auction and there may be a lead restriction.

Extract from Law 16 Unauthorised Information
 A player of an offending side may not choose a call or play that is suggested over another by unauthorized information if the other call or play is a logical alternative. The Director may assign an adjusted score if he considers that the non-offending side has been damaged.

A Horrible Hand

It is said *by whom? Ed* that there are no bad hands in duplicate bridge. Well let’s see. This is hand 1 from 10th February 2023.

Vul nil		Dealer N
	♠ T64	
	N ♥ A87532	E
W	♦ A8	♠ AKQ52
♠ J73	♣ J7	♥ 9
♥ KQJT6		♦ KQ32
♦ T7		♣ AQ2
♣ T63	♠ 98	
	♥ 4	
	S ♦ J9654	
	♣ K9854	

With 9 points and a six-card suit North has a textbook weak 2H bid. East has 20 points and starts with a takeout double. West passes for penalties and EW make 9 tricks. North is 4 down for -800 points.

Suppose North passes then East bids 2C. After a positive bid of 2H from West, East is thinking slam but missing two aces the brakes are applied. The trouble is that there are only 10 tricks so if EW are using Blackwood, they are already too high before the bail out.

Most people in the Club use Gerber so they are in 4S and they expect to make an overtrick. Then comes the final twist.

Dummy has bid Hearts and then bid 4D to say, “No Aces.” South may lead his singleton ♥4 hoping to find partner with the Ace. North can see all 13 Hearts and knowing that both East and South are now void returns a Heart. If East fails to ruff high then South over-ruffs. There are still two losers (♦A & ♣K) so South goes one down.

To summarise: If North bids correctly then the contract goes 4 off doubled. If East opens the bidding and West correctly responds then they are in 4S and it is extremely easy to go one off. Lesser EW will bid and make 3S.

There you have it. A hand where experts fail and lesser players shine. Is this a horrid hand? Your call!

I’m Not Your Mum!

Clear up your mess at the end of the session. Pens, bidding pads etc. in the box. Used slips in the bin. And Please! Wash up your coffee cups.



Everyone's favourite convention.

Suppose you were only allowed three artificial conventions. Which ones would you choose? Most people would answer Stayman, Ace Asking and Strong 2 Clubs. Of course, Gerber Burghers and Blackwoodsmen will disagree on which is the best Ace Asker but they agree that they need something.

What about Stayman? This is so common that you don't alert it. What's more if you play 2C as a natural take-out of 1NT then you must alert the natural bid. So, it may come as a surprise to learn that Stayman is not taught in the Beginners' Lessons. This article attempts to explain why.

This article assumes Weak No Trump. (12-14 points) If you play a different range, you'll have to adjust the point values.



Sam Stayman

Stayman is a convention used for locating a 4-4 major suit fit after partner opens 1NT and promises at least one 4-card major.

After 1NT – 2♣ –, opener's rebids are.

- 2♦ Denies a 4-card major.
- 2♥ Has a 4-card heart suit and may have spades.
- 2♠ Has a 4-card spade suit and does not have hearts.

Variations

Like most conventions, Stayman has variations. In Blind Stayman, which must be alerted, responder can call 2♣ without a 4-card major. With super-accept the opener can bid 3♥ or 3♠ with 14 points and a good 4-card suit. Another variation uses the reply 2NT to show both majors. This means that 2♥ denies a 4-card spade suit. We

will not discuss these variations.

When To Use

There are three things you should know before using an artificial convention.

1. Exactly what calls to make and what they mean.
2. All the possible responses.
3. When you should not use it.

When using an artificial convention, it is important to make sure that your partner knows and agrees all the responses.

The calls and responses are simple; that is not the problem. The problem with Stayman is that beginners call it when they shouldn't. You must never call any convention if you cannot handle any legitimate response. If the reply is your 4-card suit then you can pass or bid on depending on your strength. If you get an unwelcome response, you can bid 2NT with 11 points or 3NT with 12-19 points. (With 20 or more points you'll be starting a slam sequence.) With 10 or fewer points a beginner would be in trouble after a bad response. Consequently, most textbooks say that you need 11 points to call Stayman.

Garbage and Crawling Stayman

An expert (with an expert partner) is not so restricted. Suppose you have zero points and your partner calls 1NT. If the next player doubles, you use one of the escapes described last month. But suppose you aren't doubled. 1NT is going off screaming so you need to run. With a 5-card suit you can make a normal weak take-out. With a both majors you can use a weak Stayman

If you have 4 Diamonds, 4 Hearts and 4 Spades then bid 2♣ and pass any reply. The worst reply is 2♦ but if the opener doesn't have a 4-card major then he must have at least 3 (and probably 4) diamonds. You are still going off but you are likely to be in the best contract. This is called Garbage Stayman.

Suppose you have 4 cards in both majors and 3 or fewer Diamonds. You call Stayman and if the reply is 2♥ or 2♠ then you pass. If you hear 2♦ then you bid 2♥. Partner should pass with 3 Hearts but with 2 Hearts, Partner bids 2♠. This is Crawling Stayman and it guarantees you at least a 4-3 fit.

Of course, if you are going to play any strange conventions, you really should discuss and agree them with your partner – preferably before you call.

The Back Page

Lessons – Beginners

By the time you see this, lessons will have started. The first sessions are scheduled for Monday 13 March and Tuesday 14 March. All Club Members are welcome to come along. All you need is a pair of ears.

The first lesson is very simple. It teaches the mechanics of playing the game. (“*This is a card. It’s flat and oblong!*”) Not really suitable for anyone who has actually played Bridge. The second lesson starts teaching bidding. That is when Club Members should join.



Whilst the second lesson is basic, it is the building block on which the entire bidding edifice depends.



A Non-event

Last month we asked for members’ thoughts on coffee and the editor received just three emails! *The circulation list has 150 recipients.* Ed Two emails were very keen on getting better coffee – quote “Nescafé tastes like brown cardboard.” One email was a courtesy note, “I don’t drink coffee myself but ...”

So now we know. Our members aren’t too bothered and we shall continue to buy economical coffee. If you want better coffee then bring your own.

Spot the Convention



Multi-Two Diamond.

Devised by experts to bamboozle other international players, it was originally restricted to high level tournaments. Now it is used in ordinary club sessions.

Tournaments

Did you know that tournaments are a way of fund raising through the year to help make money to keep the club financially sound. There’s always a raffle prior to a tournament but that sometimes is not always profitable if not enough tickets are sold to help cover costs. Sometimes we get lucky and are able to be sponsored for events.

We’ve kept subs to \$60.00 (discounted rate) and table money is only \$5.00. That’s not bad for all day entertainment. Where else can you go for \$5.00 with tea and coffee supplied?

Without rambling on too much, 9 tables sees the tournament break even by the time we have covered costs such as director, catering, prizes and cleaning. If there are more than 9 tables then the club makes a profit from that day.

What can you do as a member? Well, why not enter some tournaments? They are all listed in your programme book; why don’t you play in one?

What else can we do, as the club, to encourage you to play in them?

10A or 5A tournaments see Auckland players coming to play here. That’s great because playing better players helps to improve your bridge – not to mention nothing gives me greater pleasure if I can beat them.

Most B tournaments have only Northland players playing. What’s so frightening about that? In our everyday playing sessions, you are already playing Open players such as Patsy Walters, Stanley Abrahams, Margaret Hooson, Neil Ruddell, John McIntosh, Lee Walters, Tania Brown and Len Dent to name a few. So, it’s not so different on a tournament day.

There are the Graded tournaments where Intermediate and Junior players only play other Intermediate and Junior players. The next one is on 1st April. Why not enter it? You have nothing to lose. Come and have a go and as I have said all donations go towards the club so the more the merrier. Entry fee to play in a tournament is normally \$25.00. You bring your own lunch and supply a plate for morning tea – nothing fancy. Come on, grab a partner and enter. Meet some new people.

Any questions feel free to ask a committee member or call Lee on 0211323287 or leewalters14@gmail.com.

Watch for posters/flyers advertising tournaments on club noticeboards.