



Taradale Bridge Club Incorporated

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February 2019 Newsletter

Hi Taradale Bridge Players

It has been great to see good numbers at the sessions already this year. No doubt many of us are feeling a tad rusty – I, for example, on the second hand I played this year started bidding with 1♣. I was mortified to look again at my hand for my rebid to see I had 5♠ cards and only 3♣ cards! The anxiety was further enhanced when my partner put me into a small slam of 6♣. I rescued it to 6NT which luckily made! Once again we have a sizable contingent of our club members heading off to the Gold Coast Congress in Australia. All the best to you all and we look forward to hearing of your successes. **For those staying, don't forget our Intermediate Tournament on 23 February – support your club and the tournament secretary - grab a partner and have a go!**

We welcome the following **new members** – please add their phone numbers to your membership booklet:

Noel Woodhall	New associate member, home club Havelock North	877 7191
Claire Woodhall	New associate member, home club Havelock North	877 7191
Kingsley Dep	Restarting to play.	844 2437
Penny Cooper	New associate member, home club Napier	021 668 782
Mike Callahan	New associate member, home club Napier	835 1802

Upcoming tournaments, being run by Taradale Bridge or local Clubs -

- 23 February – Taradale Intermediate Pairs 5B
- 16 March – Taradale Lawson Jugs Open 8B

Also

- 23 March – Hastings Open Pairs – 5A

Club Bridge Results – as you are no doubt aware several bridge sessions have the winners accumulated over the whole year i.e. Monday morning, Monday evening, Tuesday afternoon, and Thursday afternoon. The Wednesday evening bridge sessions are accumulated over a month and the recent results for those have the following winners of the month

Competition	Winners
Summer Individual (Wednesday Night)	Ruth Spittle with over 60%



Bridge Lessons – The club is most fortunate to have Ruth Spittle as the leader for the “learn to play bridge” lessons. Whilst the lessons are not due to start until 14 March, I thought it worthwhile to mention, as many of you may have friends who wish to join you in playing bridge and you can nurture their

interest in advance!

Ruth Duckworth

Sadly we lost this member of our 90 and over club recently. Ruth was an example of a life well lived. She remained an enthusiastic player right to the end. RIP, Ruth.

From The Co-President Desk

Hello everyone. It has been great to see 15+ tables regularly on Monday and Thursday



mornings, as well as good numbers at our junior/senior night. The hot weather has made getting the air conditioning to suit everyone a real challenge for our directors. Please be patient, we will be complaining about cold weather soon enough. Avoid the ‘cold’ tables if you prefer to be a little warmer. Also a reminder that we are an ungraded club and cannot specify who can attend which session. While Monday night is unofficially regarded as a night for novice/junior players, all sessions are open to all players. I am finishing the newsletter in the absence of Ash, hence the gaps and strange colours for which I apologise. He is much more tech savvy than me. Enjoy your Bridge and be kind to our Directors.

From the Committee –

Viv McLauchlan has resigned from the committee due to personal commitments.

A voucher system for table money will begin soon. The vouchers will be available from the Director. Cash transactions only.

Partner Makes a Slow Pass with Larry Cohen (New Bridge Magazine December 2018)

The most frequent “ethical” problem is when a player takes advantage of his partner’s slow pass. For example, with both sides vulnerable:

West	North	East	South
3♠	Pass (45 seconds)-	Pass	?

After North takes an exceedingly long time (45 seconds) to Pass, South has an ethical dilemma. He knows that his partner has some values (isn’t broke). North didn’t pass in tempo (normal would be 5-10 seconds). He thought 45 seconds and passed. Clearly, North was thinking of doubling or overcalling. Suppose South holds:

♠A4 ♥AQ9652 ♦Q42 ♣32

Should South balance with 4♥ It is very dangerous, but not as much as when you are sure your partner has some values. Had North passed in tempo, he could easily have held an ugly 5-count. The slow pass makes it clear that North has close to opening bid values.

Is South “allowed” to bid 4♥? Is he allowed to take advantage of his partner’s tempo? In other words, is it “authorized information” to South that his partner has a decent hand? This is an unfortunate part of the game. The speed/tempo of an action gives away information. The proprieties state that information shouldn’t be conveyed by anything other than the bid itself. The speed of the bid (or heaven forbid, the emphasis of the bid – such as “snappy” or “fumbling”) must be ignored by the partner of the bidder.

So, when North makes his slow pass, South must not draw any inferences. *In fact, he should ethically bend over backwards to NOT take advantage.* With the example hand above, he should not bid 4♥. To do so would be utilizing the information that his partner has some values. If South does bid 4♥, the opponents can (and should) call the director. The director call is not an “accusation of cheating.” It is just proper procedure to draw attention to the fact that North slow-passed and South then bid. Is South *allowed* to bid? If his hand warrants it, of course he is allowed. Suppose South held:

♠A2 ♥AKJ107652 ♦32 ♣2

Who would not bid 4♥? I don't care how long North took or even if he did a cartwheel on the table. South has every right to bid what is in his hand. I've heard uninformed players erroneously state: "South was barred – his partner's slow pass *barred him from bidding.*" Not so. It bars him only in marginal cases. If it is 100% action, he can still take it. But, when it gets "marginal," the partner should not bid after obtaining "unauthorized information." He should take his medicine, be a good person, and make the ethical pass.

Having introduced the confusing concept of acting after partner's slow pass. Here is another example:

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass (very slow)	Pass	?

With both sides vulnerable, South holds

♠K873 ♥K3 ♦Q10872 ♣K2

I love to balance on this auction. If my partner had passed 2♥ in normal tempo (5 seconds or so), I would be free to use my best judgment. But, after partner's slow pass, I would feel ethically bound to pass out 2♥. I have extra information (partner thought of bidding) that it is safe to bid here. I know my partner doesn't have a bunch of garbage. I should make the ethical pass. I can't let the knowledge that partner has values influence my decision. I'll sleep better at night with a clear (ethical) conscience if I pass.

What would happen if I did balance? The opponents have the right to call the director. The director would let the bidding continue and suggest that he be called back after the deal if needed. If the director is called back (my balancing action was "successful") and deems that a panel of my peers (he can actually go away from the table, take a survey and come back to make his ruling) wouldn't balance, then the contract is restored to 2♥. Whatever actually happened at the table is "cancelled" and the director determines the score in 2♥ (leaning in the 2♥ declarer's direction to give him the most favourable outcome). If the director deems my balancing bid was normal ("everyone" would do it), then the table result stands. For example, if my hand were:

♠K875 ♥6 ♦A765 ♣K764

I could surely balance with a double. Who wouldn't? This hand is possibly worth a double the first time, but certainly clear-cut in the balancing seat after the opponents bid and raise to 2♥. The guideline on what is "allowable" is fuzzy. It reads as if a team of lawyers all got to put their words into the pot, but boils down to something to the effect of "an action taken after partner's slow pass is allowable if a normal percentage of the person's peers would have done the same." But, why go there? I prefer to just pass in close cases and not get involved with a director call and maybe taking advantage of partner's tempo. If I deem it is "close" then I just pass.

Is it wrong for the opponents to call the director if you take action after partner's slow pass? Are they being obnoxious? No! It is fully within their rights. It isn't rude. Yet, many players are offended when the director is called in this situation. Unfortunately, newer players have trouble understanding all the ramifications and they get intimidated by the director call.

Do we want the director called for these "slow pass and then partner acts" situations only in major tournaments? At a local duplicate game? In a newcomers game? This is a thorny issue where you won't get agreement from the cognoscenti. Here are the two extreme sides of the coin (about calling the director after hesitations):

A) "Director calls for tempo violations ruin the atmosphere and turn people off – don't even think of admonishing players for acting after a slow pass and don't dare call the director." "We don't want a cut-throat atmosphere. This is killing bridge. The people who bid after the slow pass don't even realize what they are doing – they don't understand the ethics involved." "Go easy on them!"

Contrasted with...

B) "Active ethics after partner's slow tempo has to be taught to players from the very start. Even in a newcomers game, this area should be handled firmly (yet politely) with education and director calls upon violation. If we don't enforce the rules, then why call it bridge?"

My preference would be somewhere in between A and B.

I leave you with this true story:

When I was 14 years old and new to duplicate, I was faced with a “huddle/bid” situation. Apparently I passed out of tempo and my 14-year old partner then bid in balancing seat. My opponent screamed (she shouldn’t have screamed) for the director. I wanted to cry – I was so embarrassed. I survived (thankfully), but didn’t understand what was happening. Ironically, some 30 years later, I was giving a lecture and in the audience was the lady who had screamed for the director.

Monthly Humour – with bridge tables closely co-located, players from an adjacent table may inadvertently hear information from the other table that may be advantageous or on occasions less so. It pays to be careful and aware what others can hear!

An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%. The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, “Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.” The gentleman replied, “Oh, I haven’t told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I’ve changed my will three times.”



Annette, Neil and Jan

Well done – Neil McDonald, NZ Bridge Volunteer of the Month! Neil does a fantastic job getting sponsorship from a range of sources for both our club and Napier. He is always quick to offer his help. Neil is a very worthy recipient of the award.

Reminders

- 23 February – Taradale Intermediate Pairs

Ash

Ash Fitchett
Newsletter Editor