



TABLE TALK

FEBRUARY 2025

TAURANGA BRIDGE CLUB | 252 Ngatai Road, Otumoetai 3110 | 07 576-5022 | www.taurangabridge.co.nz



Happy Birthday FEBRUARY

Julie Bickers
Bev Boyd
Helen Bryant
Muriel Gartland
Barbara Kelly
Helen Malcolm
Yvonne McRae

Fieke Noteboom
Alastair Pratt
Margaret Wakelin
Gay Walker
Jill Warwick
Graham Young

Please make sure that your birth month is entered into Hello Club – no need to put the year



WHAT'S HAPPENING/COMING UP (Make a note in your diary)

- **Friday 28th February** the bar will be open at end of play for purchases of alcoholic or non alcoholic beverages & of course, you're welcome to have tea or coffee and stay for a chit chat. Please bring a small plate of nibbles to share.
- **Etiquette** Please check the noticeboard.
- **Monday March 10th** 1 + 3 Swiss Teams. An Open or Intermediate player (mentor) partners with 3 Novice, Junior or Early Intermediate players in a team of 4. Registration list on the noticeboard. Fantastic opportunity!!
- **Fun Over The Bridge** hosted by us on **Sunday 30th March**. Please register your interest on the sheet on the noticeboard. We need all grades: Juniors (incl. novices), Intermediates & Open. You may enter individually, as a pair or as a Team (obviously you must be the same grade)

BEGINNERS LESSONS

Lessons for Beginners (or a Refresher) begin Tuesday 4th 6.45 for 7pm & Friday 7th March 12.45 for 1pm.
Remember... Any member may attend (at no charge) however please let us know for handouts & cards dealt.

The Club would appreciate you spreading the word to friends & family. Many of us wish we'd found Bridge earlier than we did.

'Research has shown that Bridge is excellent for developing concentration and problem-solving skills, especially in children. It's also a very social game, so a good way to make new friends. You don't have to be a card shark to start playing either. Beginners can pick up the basics quickly, but there's huge scope to develop over a life-time for a truly rewarding hobby'. NZ Bridge

FINDING A PARTNER

Kay Wright, our Monday evening Partnership Steward is going to start an email 'list' as our Tues day & Friday Stewards run. Please contact Kay if you would like to be added.

Recently two members were looking for partners through the Partnership Stewards & unfortunately neither was successful. We would love to have you playing at the Club.

We're keen to know how many of you would play if you had pre-arranged partners. Please email me karyl.anderson@xtra.co.nz if you'd like to meet like-minded members. Depending on interest we could perhaps arrange an afternoon tea where you would have the opportunity to make 'bookings.'

PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS...



One thing I hear a lot at the club is "I've had no cards all day!" or some thing in a similar vein. So I thought you might like to know who or what determines the cards that we play in our club sessions, and maybe some pointers for easing the pain when you do find yourself in a dry spell.

In the October Table Talk I spoke briefly about the dealing process so here's an opportunity to go into a bit more detail. X-clubs is something that has been set up so that all participating clubs can combine their results and you can see how your actions compare to a much larger group from all across the country. The advantages to this are that scores are less random in a very large field because the impact of outlier results is minimised.

But for the scoring comparisons to make any sense all the participating clubs must play the same hands, and so someone administering X-clubs creates the hands in one central place and distributes computer files to all participating clubs that they can load into their dealing machine software.

So, when you do find yourself bereft of high card points, it certainly isn't something that we've done to spite you! When the hands are created there are parameters that can be set such as the distribution of points between players, the "balancedness" of hands etc. However, we are not aware of the parameters that are used by X-clubs when creating their hands. If you're interested, on the printed hand records there is actually a small table at the end of all the hands that tells you the point distribution and also how often the more unusual hand shapes came up.

So what are some "coping strategies" for when you do have a run of not many points? The first thing to consider is how many high card points are actually in a pack: there are 10 in each suit and therefore 40 in the pack. Since there are four players you should expect, on average, to pick up only 10 points. This means that more often than not, you won't have an opening hand. Also remember that all the other players in your seat are having to make the most of the same cards that you are and that your success in doing so is compared directly with them. Also, defence is the most undervalued part of the Bridge but at the same time the most important! You will, on average, spend twice as much time on defence as you will as declarer. So any chance for you and your partner to work on your defence should be welcomed with open arms!

Remember that just because you don't have any points it doesn't mean you can't bid. Adopt conventions that allow you to bid with less points. For example, a common use of the jump shift response is to show a very weak hand with a very long suit, so 1C - 2S would show 0-5 points but a 6 card spade suit. If you're using cue bid responses to overcalls to show 10+ points then you can jump support with very weak hands and 4 card support: (1H) - 1S - (Pass) - 3S would show 4 card spade suit but potentially very few points. As always, keep an eye on vulnerability when making these pre-emptive bids.

Make sure to re-evaluate your hand when you have a lot of shape and a known fit, for example if the bidding goes (1H) - X - (2H) you would usually need a reasonable hand to bid next since partners double is no longer in effect, something like 8+ points. But if you have 5+ spades and a bit of shape you can now be confident you have a spade fit and so you might be able to find a 2S bid with less points.

Another strategy to keep you focused when defending a lot is to ensure that you and your partner have agreed signals and discards for every trick. Every card you lead, every card you play on your partners lead, every card you play on declarers lead, and every card you discard when you can't follow suit should have a meaning. Even if you just play reverse attitude (low = like, high = hate) on everything you will still have to be thinking about every card you play on defence, as well as watching every card your partner plays! Defence becomes much less tedious when you're kept busy in this way.

To summarise: it's not our fault! But hopefully you now have some tips to help you cope.

Mike

WAIKATO BAYS
JUNIOR &
INTERMEDIATE
LEAGUE 2025

The Intermediate League kicks off Sunday 2nd March in Taupo (delayed by one day due to a 'big' event in Taupo) and the Junior League begins in Hamilton Saturday 15th March, alongside the Intermediates second event.

We strongly encourage you to take part. It's a wonderful full day of Bridge. There is a Novice Section so do check it out online.



Hugh McAlister

♠ 1093
♥ J64
♦ AQJ3
♣ J104

East deals, N/S vulnerable

♠ AKQ842
♥ Q7
♦ 72
♣ AQ9

Bidding: East opens 1H, South overcalls 1S, West passes and North raises to 2S. East now rebids 3H, and South bids game... 4S.

Lead: West leads 8H (likely top of 2 hearts), East takes his A and K of hearts (West following with the 3H), and leads 10H.

Play: *How do you proceed? Decide now...*

At the table, South ruffed high with QS, played A and K of trumps... and found he had a trump loser! The contract now depends on 2 minor suit finesses... will they **both** win?

Look at the bidding and see if that gives you a clue... see below. The optimal play here is called a "loser-on-loser" play. It looks like East has both minor suit Kings... the diamond finesse will lose... so, when East returns her/his 3rd heart, throw the 2D. West will ruff, but as the Club finesse is likely to make, you have no more losers... contract made.

Lessons:

1. The **"loser-on-loser" technique** has many faces... this is a simple example, but an excellent one. As your bridge improves, you will see more and more examples.
2. The main theme here is **"learn to read the Opponents' hands..."** East bid strongly, with no support from partner. You can expect her/him to have 6 hearts (at least), and likely almost all the outstanding points. N/S have 26 points... East should have virtually all the rest... and therefore both minor suit kings. You can confidently predict that the diamond finesse will fail, and the club finesse succeed. Taking it one step further, you would not be surprised if West had the JS, pretty much the only honour (s)he could hold, and likely 3 spades (as East's 6 hearts marks her/him with likely shortage). "Knowing" all that, the play is much simpler, isn't it?
3. Look again at the bidding... South's overcall of 1S is conservative. Many would double and later bid spades, ("double and speak", showing 16+ hcp). The bidding might then go: 1H, X, P, 2D, 2H, 2S, P, 4S. Either sequence is acceptable... all roads should lead to Rome! The fashion among Open players is more towards the former, but either is fine.

ARRIVING AT BRIDGE IN A TIMELY MANNER

Some of you may not be aware of everything that goes on behind the scenes in the office... The Director & Scorer of the day cannot set up the Bridgemates until they know EXACTLY how many tables/pairs we have in play for the session.

We ask that you are seated 15 minutes before start time. Appreciating that for some that is a gargantuan task due to work commitments & sometimes hindrances such as traffic, PLEASE make sure your partner will be on time i.e. 15 minutes early, or please do us the courtesy of phoning the Club to say you're on your way. Starting play on time leads to finishing on time. Thank you in advance.



HOUSEKEEPING

- Thanks to all our afternoon tea volunteers!!
- We would appreciate gold ice-cream containers to substitute for the blue please. It has been pointed out that we're a tad on the 'blue' side!!

BOUQUETS

Thank you to everyone involved with our very successful mini-Congress over Anniversary Weekend. Morning Tea contributions were greatly appreciated. Billes invaluable. Muriel Banks you're a star! Thanks to those who assisted her in the kitchen.



DECLARER PLAY IN NOTRUMP CONTRACTS

NZ BRIDGE IMPROVER LESSON 4

Once dummy goes down, count your certain winners and make a plan. Work out which suit or suits may provide your extra winners. Don't cash all your aces and kings until you have set up your extra tricks

COUNTING WINNERS: Check each suit for immediate winners in this example.

Contract: 3NT by West | Lead: 5H

	Declarer:	Dummy:	Winners:
	QJ 54	AK6	4 winners
	Q4	A76	1 winner (2 winners when N leads a heart)
	AK82	Q53	3 winners (maybe 4 if the suit splits 3-3)
	QJ2	6543	0 winners

What is your Plan on this hand?

With eight certain winners you need to find one more winner. When North leads a heart, play low in dummy and this will allow the QH to make the 9th trick. If the diamonds split 3-3 that will give you an additional trick.

ESTABLISHING WINNERS:

- 1. Establish a suit:** Often in a NT contract you do not have a long suit. So, choose a suit that offers the greatest chance of tricks to establish. Generally, this will be the longest and/or strongest combined suit. If there is a choice between two suits, then look for the suit with good intermediate cards. Intermediate cards are 10s, 9s and sometimes 8s.
- 2. Review the Play Techniques in Beginner Lesson 3:**
You can develop extra tricks by using the following: Promote honours; Develop a long suit; Play towards honours; Take a finesse. *Check each suit for immediate winners in this example.*

Contract: 3NT by West | Lead: 2S

	Declarer:	Dummy:	Winners:
	K74	85	1 winner (because of the lead)
	K84	AQ7	3 winners
	Q65	AJ1092	1 winner
	A754	Q82	1 winner

What is your Plan on this hand?

There are six certain winners and you need three more. The diamond suit offers the best chance of extra winners. It's important that you start from the correct hand, so play the QD from the West hand first.

- 3. Don't keep changing suits:** When you win the opening lead, play the suit(s) that may provide you with extra tricks but don't keep changing suits. Let your opponents open up new suits for you. *For example, look at the following combination:*

Q65
A983 K104
J72

Don't play a suit with a weak combination. If the opponents start playing this suit, you will win a trick (the addition of the 10 in the NS hands would guarantee you a trick).

- 4. Hold-up play:** As part of your plan, you must decide whether you should win the first trick. *Check each suit for immediate winners in this example.*

Contract: 3NT by West | Lead: 4S

	Declarer:	Dummy:	Winners:
	A83	65	1 winner
	K84	AQJ	3 winners
	Q65	KJ1092	0 winners (4 potential tricks)
	A754	Q82	1 winner

What is your Plan on this hand?

You must develop the diamond suit to make your contract. There is only one winner in the spade suit, so you should hold up your AS until the 3rd round. You are hoping that South has the AD and no more spades.

- 5. Choosing the correct suit to develop:** Don't be afraid to lose the lead early. *Check each suit for immediate winners in this example.*

Contract: 3NT by West | Lead: 4S

	Declarer:	Dummy:	Winners:
	J942	Q103	0 winners
	A82	Q976	1 winner
	AQ72	65	2 winners (because of the lead)
	K5	A863	2 winners

What is your Plan on this hand?

You have five sure tricks. You need 2 more. You have two 7-card suits to choose from. Select the spade suit because it has important intermediate cards (9S & 10S). After the opponents take their tricks (AS, KS), you have 2 certain spade winners remaining.