

# TABLE TALK

JANUARY 2024

TAURANGA BRIDGE CLUB | 252 Ngatai Road, Otumoetai 3110 | 07 576-5022 | [www.taurangabridge.co.nz](http://www.taurangabridge.co.nz)

2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy Birthday  
JANUARY



Robyn Brand  
Alastair Collie  
Sue Collin  
Nola Darvill  
Jenni Davies  
Julie Downs  
Cec Gardiner  
Carol Goldsworthy  
Kelly Greer  
Reba Hunt  
Stuart Hutchings

Graeme Ingham  
Liz Kendall  
Lynette Lauder  
Kerrie Little  
Jean Morris  
Anne Peacocke  
Rebecca Taylor  
Jill Usher  
Kim Whyte  
Kay Wright

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

## DID YOU KNOW...

The 'Stop' card is to be placed in front of the player to your left when you are about to make a 'jump' bid. Leave for 8 seconds and then please remove.



WHAT'S ON IN  
JANUARY  
(Make a note in your diary)

## JANUARY 'HOLIDAY' BRIDGE

Final session this FRIDAY. 1PM (seated by 12.45pm)  
If you don't have a pre-arranged partner, just come. However, you must be prepared to play with anyone. A committee member will be the 'spare,' but you will be first 'matched' with any other club member who arrives partnerless. We're unable to carry this into our year's programme. However, we will repeat at the end of the year with Holiday Bridge.

**PARTNERSHIP STEWARDS** are clearly identified in your program book with their contact details. PLEASE use them if you're seeking a partner.

## TAURANGA MINI CONGRESS... THIS WEEKEND ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND 27 – 29TH

27<sup>th</sup> Restricted Open Pairs & Waikato/Bays provincial Pairs  
28<sup>th</sup> Teams  
29<sup>th</sup> Consolation Pairs

*Morning tea contributions & kitchen help hugely appreciated... over 100 participants each day!! Clip board on the Tournament notice-board at the Club.*

- Our 2024 program begins **Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> Jan.** **PLEASE NOTE: NO** club play Monday 29<sup>th</sup>
- **Transport:** Please let one of the committee know if you would like assistance getting to the club.
- **Booklovers:** Our somewhat substantial collection is now located in the bookshelves on the left-hand wall down towards the kitchen. We will purge every so often, donating the books to the Waipuna Hospice shops.

## PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS...

It's interesting listening to people talking about what contracts the Bridgemates say should have been made on any given hand at club sessions.

You know, when you hit the 'Analysis' button after the score has been confirmed by East? This analysis is also called double dummy, Deep Finesse or makeables and gives the optimal result for each of the five possible contracts (NT or suits) if all four players know where all the cards lie. It tells us the theoretical best result, and it's 100% accurate! However, just because your side didn't get the number of tricks the Bridgemate says you should have got, it doesn't necessarily mean you've done anything wrong. So don't be so hard on yourself!

And definitely don't be so hard on your partner! Bridge is a game of "percentage plays". For example the classic example of you and dummy holding 8 cards in a suit, you've got all the top cards but you're missing the Queen. Assuming no other information the percentage play is to finesse for the Queen. Sure it will only work 50% of the time but the other 50% of the time you would have lost it anyway so it's worth a shot. Except every now and then the finesse fails and the naughty opponent holding the offside Queen only had a doubleton, so we could have just dropped the Queen by playing the Ace and then the King.

The chance of this happening is very slim (smarter minds than mine will know the exact percentage) and so we would never play the hand in such a way, the "percentage play" is to take the finesse.

We can't possibly know about West quietly lurking with their doubleton Queen but you know who does know? Double dummy knows. Because the double dummy analysis knows where all the cards are they know when it is correct to drop the doubleton Queen and so will say you should make an extra trick beyond what is actually reasonable.

Another example: There are very few hard and fast rules in bridge bidding and play, most of them are bent quite frequently for better or for worse. The one exception to this is that we never lead away from an Ace in a **suit contract**. So if I'm on opening lead against 4H and I'm holding A982 in spades I would never lead anything but the Ace if this is the suit I insist on leading. Every now and then a hand will come along where leading away from an Ace in a side suit is exactly what is required to take down the opponents contract and nothing else will do the job. Since on this mythical hand you probably didn't underlead your Ace, your opponents will likely make their contract and the double dummy analysis will cheerfully taunt you with the information that you should have taken the contract light.

The takeaway is that you can't just take the double dummy analysis at face value, you need to actually look at the hands and work out where you could have done better and whether or not the play required is actually sensible. Sometimes it can be quite difficult to figure out what that correct play even is once you can see all the hands! At that point I would encourage you to seek out a more experienced player and ask them if they can figure it out, most top players enjoy the challenge.

Also, when looking at a specific hand in the online results you will see there is a "Replay and analyze" link at the bottom. This can be used to see the optimum line of play for any contract.

So next time you get the bad news from the Bridgemate maybe just make a note of the board number for further analysis after the session has finished. Maybe the news won't be as bad as first thought and either way you will definitely improve your bridge by digging deeper!



## DECEMBER RESULTS

Monday	Countdown Christmas Cheer Pairs:	<b>Graham Young &amp; John Laugesen</b>
Tuesday	PMG Christmas Handicap Pairs:	<b>Jo Wenham &amp; Bill Kittle</b>
Wednesday	Michael Toner Law Festive Handicap Pairs:	<b>Alan Lawton &amp; Mel Grigsby</b>
Thursday	Craigs Championship Teams:	<b>The Simpson Team:</b> Jo & Sam Simpson & Di & Hugh McAlister
Friday	Thea Straub Christmas Pairs:	<b>Peter Hagan &amp; John Laugesen</b>



TIP OF THE MONTH #2 – A “simple slam” with some lessons

♠ A4		♠ KQ3
♥ 10986	<b>Dealer East</b>	♥ AKQJ3
♦ A10543	<b>NS Vul</b>	♦ 2
♣ Q6		♣ A832
	♠ 8652	
	♥ 754	
	♦ KQ9	
	♣ KJ10	

**BIDDING**

E is not quite strong enough for a 2C opener, and opens 1H.

W responds with a “limit raise” showing 4 hearts and 10-12 pts.

E has values for slam, but “checks” for aces with Blackwood 4NT... finding 2 aces, (s)he bids 6H.

**LEAD:** against a confident slam bid, the sequence lead (KD) is better than the “internal sequence” lead (JC). A trump lead also works well here, but, like a spade lead, risks finessing partner.

**PLAY:** In a **suit contract**, declarer first checks for potential losers (here, maybe 2 or 3 clubs), and then checks to see if anything should be done (usually ruffs in dummy, or throwing losers) *before* taking out trumps.

Win the lead with the AD, then cash the AS (high from the shorter holding first), then the K and Q of spades, throwing a club in dummy.

Play AC, then ruff a club in dummy (high, if you like). Return to hand with a trump and ruff another club (high).

Back to hand with a D ruff, then ruff the fourth club. You now have all 13 tricks (3 spades, AKQJ of hearts plus 4 more ruffs, plus 2 aces).

**LESSONS:**

The bidding is straightforward... E needs to realise her/his hand is **much** better than an opener, and just check (s)he is not missing 2 aces.

It is often easier to look at one hand first (often declarer’s hand, as here)... what can be done about those 3 club losers? (Surely one can be ruffed, unless you take out trumps first, and find a 4-0 split!).

In a suit contract, taking out trumps is often a priority... **UNLESS** you need to deal with some losers first,... as here. **If you had taken out trumps first, you would go 1 light, instead of making an easy overtrick!**

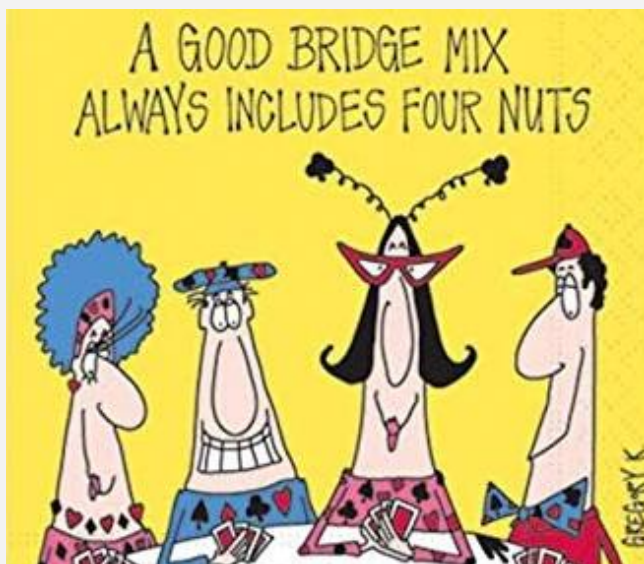
Hugh McAlister



2024 BRIDGE LESSONS

Tutor: Mike Newton & ‘associates’

- Lesson 1 Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm
- The lessons will run for 15 weeks, finishing Wednesday, 12 June
- Please keep in mind so you can spread the word... encourage family & friends to attend
- Any club member may attend the lessons – no charge. *Please let admin know*
- Flyers will soon be available for you to pass to friends and family



# MUSINGS AT THE TABLE (Hugh McAlister)

I am sometimes asked a question about **alerting**. This is a big topic, but I'll make a start...

Law 40 states *“each partnership has a duty to make its partnership understanding available to its opponents.”* Increasingly, at tournaments, we are exhorted to adopt the principles of **“active ethics,”** by which is meant a full and helpful explanation of our peculiar arrangements in any particular situation.

We achieve this in a number of ways:

- **Alerts** – this is a routine part of Club bridge, but in subsequent columns we shall delve into some of the (sometimes confusing) intricacies
- **Pre-alerts** – a proactive warning about “special arrangements” which are not easily alerted. This particularly affects Teams bridge, where one plays the same opponents for more boards.
- **System cards** – not required for Club sessions.

## WHAT SHOULD BE ALERTED

- 1C and 1NT are routinely explained e.g. “4 plus,” or “12-14”
- All bids which have a special meaning to partner, not just “artificial bids”... eg some play 1C–2C as strong, and 1C-3C as weaker... this should be alerted
- “Pass” should be alerted when it has a special meaning... eg over 1NT-X-... “pass” may mean “please redouble partner.”

## WHAT SHOULD NOT BE ALERTED

There are some frequently used simple conventions that are no longer alerted, **as long as they are used in the accepted standard way**, eg:

- 1NT-2C if “simple Stayman”
- 1NT-2C-2D if denies a 4-card major
- 2C is not alerted, as long as it is strong and conforms to the “rule of 29” (total pts plus length of 2 longer suits is 29 or more)
- 2C-2D is not alerted if weak, usually 0-7 pts
- Cue bids of suits bid by the opponents (self-alerting)
- X and XX (redouble) are not alerted
- Bids above 3NT are not alerted (except on-line)

More on alerting next month... (please ask me, or the Editor, if you have any questions. **AND REMEMBER:** Be kind to partner, and friendly to your opponents (...but not generous...))

## HOUSEKEEPING REMINDERS

Please be seated at least 15 minutes before scheduled play. Allows the Director adequate time to arrange play and a timely start

At the end of play, please push your chairs in, empty the blue bin and return the boards and Bridgemate to the front desk, any cups to the kitchen

Very helpful if you remember to wear your name badge. If you would like to order a new name badge... we have a new supplier \$16. A sheet will be available at the desk in the main room.

We have 2 designated car parks in the lower car park for members with mobility challenges. These are used on Fridays – please ensure you park elsewhere.



## A WEE WOOPSIE IN THE PUBLISHING OF OUR NEWSLETTER'S FIRST EDITION...

### Three Truisms of Good Declarer Play

1. Think before playing to the first trick... if you did not unblock KS on trick 1, you could not make this contract;
2. Learn to read opponents' cards from their play... the 3S lead tells you a lot; and
3. Most importantly, create and protect valuable entries to dummy....you will lose tricks playing away from your hand. A simple unblock on trick 1 made this contract possible.

Please feel free to contact Karyl re any mis-steps. [karyl.anderson@xtra.co.nz](mailto:karyl.anderson@xtra.co.nz)

