

Newsletter




Editor's Comment

As another year bites the dust, it is time to reflect on recent bridge happenings and advise our members of what to do in the off season!

Firstly, we have had a change in our personnel and would like to welcome Diana Balkin as our new SABF Secretary in place of Andrew Cruise who has resigned. Diana comes with a wealth of experience and will be a definite asset to us. Her contact details are cellphone 083 3774192 and email diana@headcount.co.za. Now is the time to contact Diana if your email is not receiving the Newsletters or details of forthcoming events or other important information. It could be your email is wrongly recorded with us - remember email is fussy and just one small mistake in the address means your email is not effective with us. She will be assisted by Tas Nestoridis.

Secondly, please think about paying your SABF and Union fees now. The SABF fees remain unchanged at R250 for a whole year plus a small fee to your local Union e.g. GBU remains unchanged at R50. Two points to remember here. Most of us eat out sometimes and a meal now will cost almost as much (or more if you are in an expensive restaurant!) than we are asking for a whole year of your favourite fix. Also we do not take any money for administration unlike charities for example who whip away a considerable amount for this. We, the Committee, are not paid nor do we play in events for free. We do this because we are passionate about bridge and want to give something back to a game which has given us so much pleasure.

Thirdly, this Newsletter contains many reports on recent bridge events, both face to face and online. Possibly too many competitions crammed together and with events already planned for 2025 and displayed on the SABF Calendar, an attempt has been made to space them out better. If you are a person who does not normally enter events as you consider yourself not strong enough to do so, I urge you to have a rethink. I consider myself an average standard club member and have thoroughly enjoyed all the events I have competed in this year. I have made new friends and find the bridge community to be a friendly one. If you are an online fanatic, please reconsider coming back to a face to face club. My UK bridge friends tell me



their face to face clubs also went into decline after Covid - let us do our utmost to keep our clubs going. Many of our face to face clubs are small and need your personal support. It is the 'proper' form of bridge after all. The South African Bridge Congress is being held in Johannesburg this year and I urge you to please think about attending this.

Fourthly and lastly, my sincere best wishes to you all during this holiday season and for the coming New Year. I am sure I speak for all when I say good health and enough money to live comfortably is important. If you are travelling, be safe. Above all continue to enjoy life and may bridge be an important feature in your life!

Yours in bridge,

Deirdre Ingersent

Getting To Know Your SABF Committee

————— **JOCELYN is the current Vice Chair** —————

I started learning bridge in 1995 and 2 years later my partner (Andy Gray) persuaded me to play in Congress in Johannesburg. It was a disaster but we had the best time.

Nothing scared us – 2 years later we traveled to Bermuda to take part in the 2000 WBF Bermuda Trans-nationals – we came last in the field but we played against the heroes like Meckstroth and Omar Sharif and every imp gained was a victory!

Fast forward to 2015 – Shirley Kaminer & I were selected to represent SA in the African Zonals in Egypt and the World Bridge championships in India. It was a wonderful experience.

During our time in Egypt, Tim Cope (our coach) asked “why cant we have the next Zonals in Cape Town” and in 2017 - with Tim at the helm and a committee of bridge players - we arranged the event at the President Hotel which was a great success and also a lot of fun.

That started my “career” of organizing events and I have been doing so ever since.

It was at that time that I joined the SABF committee and am at present Vice President. I am also a member of the WCBU committee.

I am so grateful for the friendships and camaraderie that bridge has given me. It's been an exciting journey with some of the best people I know.

I am married to Tony and have 2 children and grandchildren who live in USA. Tony has always been my staunchest supporter in all I do.

The **Links Bridge Club** *post Covid*

The Links in Johannesburg remains one of the largest bridge clubs in the world. Over 20 Years ago you would regularly find 300+ players attend Saturday afternoon face-to-face sessions, with scoring being done manually as was seeding for subsequent sessions. Promotion from the G to F section was a cause for celebration!

Thanks to Pierre du Toit and the late Bernard Scop, The Links became a pioneer in real time electronic scoring and, in particular, registration, ladder and seating programs, which enabled accurate seating of players within minutes of registration closing. This is the same program which continues to be utilised to this day.

The advent of Covid saw a massive instant increase in online play, which became a saviour to many during the long months of isolation.

Today, The Links has over 500 members plus over 200 'guest' players, and runs 14 tournaments each week, of which 4 are face-to-face and 10 online. As Chairperson and Manager of The Links respectively, Peta Feinstein and Rob Stephens have continued the tradition of innovation, now coupled with successful development sessions.

On Thursday mornings 80 players on average attend a Supervised face-to-face session with several of our international players assisting. There is also a Gentle Tournament on a Tuesday morning where beginners and social players are introduced to organised/competitive bridge, again under helpful supervision.

Regarding the 10 regular online tournaments, Rob runs an online Masterpoints Race, based on BBO Masterpoints. This competition currently has 849 participants, of which 621 players having scored at least a fraction of a point. The top 3 players in each of the 4 "Brackets" are presently as follows:

A	B	C	D
Chris Bosenberg	Delys Shepard	Jackie Solovei	Derek Lurie
Merle Modlin	Charmaine Lobel	Fiona Smith	Joan Israelite
Neville Eber	Howard Strauss	Gill Blumberg	Miriam Treger

This race will continue for the remainder of the year, with some good BBO \$ Prizes in store for the winners. More details can be found on The Links' website: <https://www.bridgewebs.com/links/> Saturday afternoon face-to face sessions have a participation of 120 players on average, most pleasing in the post-Covid environment.

Rob can be contacted on 072 431 6599 should you wish to join The Links bridge community.



Our Buenos Aires Experience

by Lex van Vught

The sprawling capital of Argentina is polluted, crowded, chaotic, and quite magnificent. Low-slung French-style and Italianate buildings, magnificent parks, the jacaranda blooms and gorgeous spring sunshine recalled the old lie about the 'Paris of South America'. It was our daily joy to walk to the World Bridge Games venue through a park and many sculptures, dog walkers, children at play, buskers and pop-up markets.

A magical attraction right in the centre of BA is the Recoleta Cemetery, a photogenic mini city of statues and baroque mausoleums.

Virtually nobody speaks English in South America, which was an amusing issue for us. Spanish is the second most numerous mother tongue in the world after Mandarin Chinese. Changing dollars into pesos was also a challenge, but Carlos, in a grey coat and on a street corner, was most obliging.

At dusk the arty, foodie city gets even more vibrant as the locals take to the streets, and to the plethora of bars and restaurants, with music everywhere. But after playing 50 boards each day, energy levels were wilting...

As you are aware, our National teams were unable to make it through the qualifying rounds in any of the categories during the 1st week of the World Championship, but had some excellent results in week two, in the Open and Mixed Pairs, as well as a BAM teams event. I enjoyed the immense privilege of playing with

Rob Stephens and probably caused him to sob quietly in his pillow each night. It was an exhilarating experience for me, playing board after board against professionals and experts from around the world.

One board I must relate. In the deal below, Rob made the inspired lead of ♠8 from under his king against a 7♦ contract:

What would you do as declarer? South went up with Ace, I played low (udca). Declarer continued with ♥A and a ♠discard. He then played ♠Q for a ruffing finesse, discarding a ♣, and lost to Rob's ♠K! Declarer was on my side of the screen, and went puce. On

Board 25. Dealer North. E-W Vulnerable.

♠ A Q J 9 3

♥ A 9

♦ Q T 6 4

♣ 8 2

♠ K 8 7 2

♥ T 8 7 6 3

♦ 7 3

♣ Q T



♠ T 5

♥ K Q J 5 4 2

♦ -

♣ K J 6 5 4

♠ 6 4

♥ -

♦ A K J 9 8 5 2

♣ A 9 7 3

reflection, although the ♠8 looks to be from nothing, that would give me ♠KTxx, in which case even if the ruffing finesse works, there would still be insufficient discards for all the club losers. Declarer's only legitimate chance was to finesse at trick 1, but we all hate to go down in a slam on trick 1, so he has my sympathy!

After the tournament Joan joined us and the three of us went to explore the amazing fauna and flora of the Pantanal and Amazon in Brazil. Amongst others we saw 8 jaguars (one taking a cayman), and 235 species of birds, of which only 3 occur in Africa.



Submitted by Lex van Vught

MIXED PAIRS BBO EVENT

This event was recently held on 3 successive Wednesday evenings using the BBO format. With face to face evening play no longer happening due to Covid and an ageing bridge community, this event was now open to all South African bridge players. It attracted a draw of 32 pairs and indeed all regions of the country were represented.

Congratulations to the winners

- 1st NEVILLE EBER and VAL BLOOM 62.59%
- 2nd CRAIG GOWER and DI ROSSLEE 57.84%
- 3rd KEVIN SMITH and CAROL STANTON 53.84%

As a participant myself who found the event most enjoyable, I would just like to encourage other players at my level to enter. The entry fee was minimal and what an opportunity it was to play against players one normally would not meet? All the top level players were polite and no awkward questions were asked. Their systems of play were clearly displayed and the time allowance was plenty (indeed the stronger players would perhaps argue too much time each round!) If one does not attempt to move out of one's bridge comfort zone and play against stronger and more experienced players how can one hope to improve at the game?

Submitted by Deirdre Ingersent

3 AMAZING pieces of BRIDGE TRIVIA which you can use to impress your friends!

1 *How many legal calls are there in bridge?*

There are 38 legal calls. Of these, it is generally considered that the pass is the hardest to use correctly! There are 5 denominations and 7 levels you can bid them at, another 35. The set is made up by the double and redouble.

2 *Can computers play bridge as well as human beings?*

No, or at least not yet Alan Truscott, a bridge expert says. They can do well in solving play problems requiring analysis but are weak in areas requiring judgment, particularly in bidding. In 1998 Matt Ginsberg's GIB robot finished 12th in a field of 34 top players in the Par Contest at the World Championships held in Lille, France. This was a setting with prepared deals, favouring the computer. The computer would do worse in a normal tournament.

3 *Do you know the name of the world famous person who said "Bridge grips you. Many games provide you with fun, but bridge grips you. It exercises your mind. Your mind can rust, you know, but bridge prevents the rust from forming. Bridge is my passion."*

Omar Sharif, who, as a young man, learned bridge on movie sets while waiting for his turn in front of the cameras. He was able to hold his own with the world's best in top tournament play.

THE BRIDGE LOUNGE

THE DUPLICATE PARTY NEW YEAR MIRACLE

(I am not the writer of this poem, but that person remains unknown)

★ North dealer

NORTH

SAKQJ1098765432

WEST

CAKQJ1098765432

EAST

DAKQJ1098765432

SOUTH

HAKQJ1098765432

West	North	East	South
	Pass	2D	2H
3H	Pass	3S	4H
7NT	Dbl	All pass	

'Twas the duplicate New Year party, and needless to say, The wine and the season had made us quite gay. "Find your seats and shuffle" the director said, As visions of first place danced in my head.

★ We checked our position, I got dry in the mouth, We were assigned table one seated North/South. Just little novices, my partner and me, We'd placed fourth once before, never even three.

Had fate decided to put us to the test? For two life masters were seated East/West. We took our positions and said not a word, But I'm certain our heartbeats could surely be heard.

We shuffled the cards without blinking an eye. I dropped a card on the floor and thought I would die. As North I was dealer, and though I was green, I knew to open you must have thirteen.

I sorted my hand and counted, but alas, With only ten points I had to pass. And frankly, I thought that this was a shame, I'd never before had thirteen spades in a game.

My left hand opponent, East by name, Opened two diamonds – I thought "what a shame". My partner South was trembling with fear, Then the bid of two hearts came across to my ear.

My right hand opponent sat straight up in his chair, Three hearts was the bid he chose to declare. Now I had a good suit but alas, With no help in hearts..... I had to pass.

My left hand opponent now bid three spades, And I'm sure you can imagine how I was amazed. My partner South bid four hearts but shoot, If they take the bid I couldn't lead her suit.

My right hand opponent studied his hand, And seven no trump was his command. It was my turn to bid so just to save face, I doubled 'cause he was missing an ace!

The next three bids were pass, pass, pass, I was ready to lead a spade but alas. My partner was nervous and she lead the heart king, A lead out of turn! What a damnable thing!

★ The director was called. I still hear her voice, As she told the declarer he could make his own choice. With a singleton heart you must understand, This could be the only entry to his hand.

So he turned to me, and looking very smart, He said "lead what you wish but don't lead a heart". So, of course, I led my fourth best spade, I guess it was the best lead I ever made.

For with this hand I never lost the lead, And our opponents then had to sadly concede. As thirteen tricks we took off the top, When we won the board I thought I would drop.

Now I ask you with a start like this, The rest of the game..... well how could we miss? When the game was over the director asked, "Who had the thirteen spades and so cleverly passed?"

Submitted by Jeff Sapire

2024 CAPE FESTIVAL EVENT

14 Teams and 48 pairs spent 2 ½ days playing bridge in Cape Town under the watchful eye of Neil Hayward, our TD.

Phil King (the master of all charts!) assisted Neil with the Teams on day 1 which was a Swiss movement.



Winners of the teams:

A section: Alon Apteker, Jude Apteker, Craig Gower and Brian Pincus

B section: Erica Zimet, Wentzel, Cynthia Cohen and Sandra Jacobs

The Pairs winner:

1st Craig & Brian

2nd Leif Stabell & Omphemetse Moedi.

It was wonderful to see the excitement and camaraderie of the group and a great way to end the bridge calendar for the year.

The Festival has been a feature on the calendar for many years and apart from local players, there were participants from Botswana, Zimbabwe, Darling, Franschoek, Hermanus, Johannesburg and abroad.

In fact some of our “swallows” time their holidays to be here in time for the Festival.

The excellent catering deserves a mention: Cape Town Sports Council, Kanonkop wines, Bags of Bites, Colin Shapiro (braai master) made it an even more memorable event.

Submitted by Jocelyn Ashberg



Left: These are the Pairs Winners - Craig Gower from Joburg playing with Brian Pincus

Below: Second in the Pairs A - Omphemetse Moedi from Botswana playing with Leif Stabell , a Cape Town swallow! In between them are Glen Holman and Jocelyn Ashberg, two of the organisers.



This online event took place over the last weekend of November and attracted 14 teams from around the country.

Winners N Eber, V Bloom, C Bosenberg, C Whitburn

Runners Up P Ward, M Modlin, A van Niekerk, R Duff

Here are a couple of hands I thought interesting

North

♠ A854

♥ 864

♦ J754

♣ Q6

South

♠ KJ973

♥ AKQ3

♦ 3

♣ A105

All North/Souths sailed into 4S by South and six of them received the lead of the H10. Plan your play

Plan A

There is a real possibility of making an overtrick on this hand, the hearts might break or West might be holding the CK so it seems that the play of the hand really comes down to how you play the trumps, do you play for the drop (38%) or play East for 3 to the queen and take the finesse (25%)?

I along with four of the top players in the country played for the drop and most of them subsequently went off. Two of them – one of them was me - weren't punished for this error when East took pity on them.

Plan B

Only Miggie Leigh asked herself the right question – how do I make this contract if the trumps are 2-2 or East started with 3 to the queen? The answer is you must take the spade finesse on the second round. If this loses to the queen the defence can only take one trick in each minor suit and you will come to 10 tricks. If the JS holds then you can draw the last outstanding trump with your king making 5 trump tricks

in your hand, one ruff in dummy, 3 hearts and 1 club, again coming to 10 tricks.

Plan C

But no one asked themselves how they could make this contract against any 2-2 or 3-1 break in spades. The foolproof play at trick 2 was to lead a small diamond toward dummy. The defence will win this trick and probably try another diamond or heart, but now you simply revert to plan B above. If East shows out on the second round then you win with the king and play a small club to the queen. If West wins and cashes his top spade (best) you will end up making 5 spades, 3 hearts and 2 clubs. If East wins he can no longer access his partner's hand to cash his master trump and you can cross ruff the hand to your hearts content eventually coming to 10 tricks

Here is the full hand

	N isobelsp ♠ A854 ♥ 864 ♦ J754 ♣ Q6	W N E S P 2♠ P 1♠ P P P 4♠
	W Hcbfick ♠ 2 ♥ 10975 ♦ K108 ♣ J9873	E Dunx ♠ Q106 ♥ J2 ♦ AQ962 ♣ K42
	S mignonlei ♠ KJ973 ♥ AKQ3 ♦ 3 ♣ A105	4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0

The other hand of interest was this one

North

♠ AQ7542
 ♥ J
 ♦ 9432
 ♣ Q9

East

♠ 1096
 ♥ Q109873
 ♦ K10
 ♣ A2

At most tables East opened with a weak 2H followed by 3C from South, 4H from West, 4S from North and 5C from South as the final contract.

West leads a small heart, you cover the jack with your queen and this is won by the ace declarer continuing with the H6 ruffed in dummy. Your partner on this trick confirms he started with 4 hearts. Plan your defence.

Declarer now plays a small diamond from dummy and if you make the mistake of playing the 10 declarer will proceed to make his contract. The expert play here is to rise with the king for if declarer holds both the ace and queen there is little hope of defeating this contract. Declarer wins with the ace and tries a small club to the queen. You win this, play your D 10 and when this is covered by the jack and queen your partner returns a third diamond for you to ruff.

Here is the full hand

		N larryc777 ♠ AQ7542 ♥ J ♦ 9432 ♣ Q9		<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♥</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♥</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>5♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				W	N	E	S			2♥	3♣	4♥	4♠	P	5♣	P	P	P	
		W	N	E	S																		
		2♥	3♣																				
4♥	4♠	P	5♣																				
P	P	P																					
W C33 ♠ KJ86 ♥ K542 ♦ Q65 ♣ 106		E bosie1 ♠ 1093 ♥ Q109873 ♦ K10 ♣ A2																					
		S goldbar ♠ ♥ A6 ♦ AJ87 ♣ KJ87543		5♣ S NS: 0 EW: 0																			

The hand is interesting for other reasons. At most tables at trick 3 declarer cashed the spade ace then ruffed a spade finally losing 2 diamond tricks as after that start neither defender had any trouble working out what to hold on to. A better play must be a small diamond at trick 3 from dummy as you might catch East napping. Chris wasn't alone in finding the excellent play of the king both Mark Oliff and Gail Gersowsky found the same defence but in both cases declarer had first cashed his spade ace exposing his void and making the key play that much easier to find

Submitted by James Grant

DARLING DAISY'S TIPS FOR BEGINNERS!

1. WATCHING AND KEEPING TRACK OF THE CARDS

This seems so basic but in reality many players who would describe themselves as good club players or advanced in bbo terms don't do this! Every deal starts with 52 cards, 13 in each player's hand. If you watch closely the cards that have gone, you know which remain. The more cards and tricks that have gone, the easier it is to deduce what cards a player has left. Especially important to watch out for is when someone shows out of a suit. Then you know that the other unseen hand has all the remaining cards in the suit. Most players know which high cards have gone but on some deals the spot cards are important too.

EXAMPLE

	AQ52	
KJ43		76
	1098	

If the 10 is led (top of sequence) it will be covered by the J and Q. At a later stage the 9 is led which holds. Then the 8 is played which is covered by the K and ace. East shows out of this suit on the 3rd round. Careful watching will show that with East playing the 7 and the 6 on the first two rounds North's 5 will be a winner on the 4th round.

Beginners please remember to concentrate on watching the cards played as it happens as once a trick is closed (i.e. placed face down) that trick may not be looked at again!

2. LEADING MAJORS NOT MINORS

If you are the opening leader, and it is unclear what suit to lead, it is generally best to prefer an unbid major to an unbid minor. The logic is if the opponents have the majors they will tend to bid them in the hope of finding an 8 card fit.

EXAMPLE 1

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
PASS	3NT	PASS	1NT

It can be assumed that North does not hold a 5 card major as no transfer or jump to 3 of a suit and probably no 4 card suit either as Stayman was not used.

EXAMPLE 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
PASS	3D	PASS	1D
PASS			3NT

With this bidding it must mean North does not have a 4 card or a 5 card major so perhaps holds length in clubs.

EXAMPLE 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
PASS	1D	PASS	1NT
PASS	3NT	PASS	

Here South does not have a 4 card major and probably does not hold 4 diamonds either. A speculative club lead is likely to hit South's main suit on this bidding sequence.

Submitted by Deirdre Ingersent





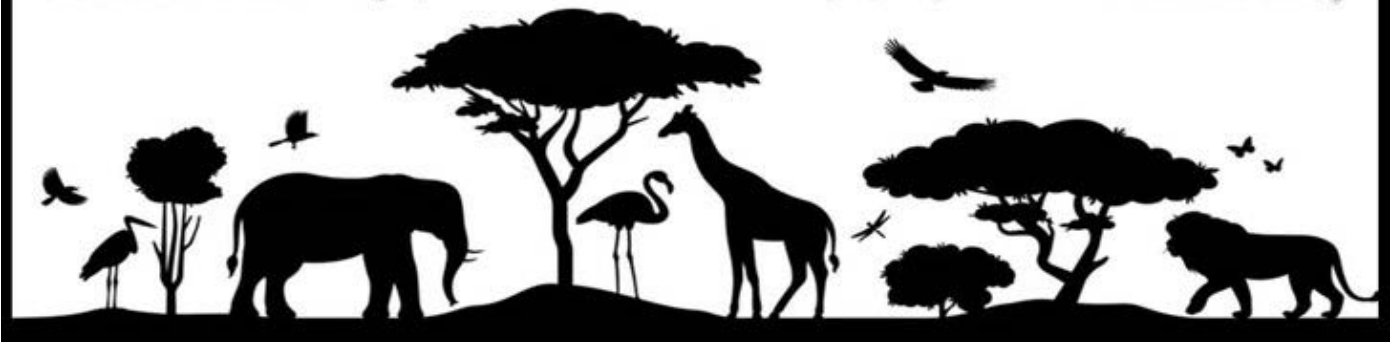
National Congress 2025



Johannesburg, South Africa

18 - 25 May 2025

Teams: 18-22 May | Mixed Pairs: 22 May | Open Pairs: 23-25 May



**South African Bridge Federation
National Congress 2025**

Welcome to the home of the SABF National Congress 2025.

This week long competition from 18 - 25 May 2025 is South Africa's premier tournament, consisting of National Teams, National Pairs, Mixed Pairs and a No Fear Pairs.

We welcome players from around the country as well as the world to join us in Johannesburg for an amazing week of good bridge and great hospitality.