

Editor's Comment

This year is rushing on so fast and November is crammed full of events to enter so perhaps a good point to take stock of our bridge playing community. Are the South African Bridge Federation offering enough to satisfy every bridge playing member? There seem to be many events to enter and a good mix of face to face events and online competitions, both BBO and RealBridge. However there has been a noted decline in participation in face to face competitions in 2025. Even bbo competitions are not attracting as many as in previous years. Opportunities to learn the game at very little cost have been launched and have attracted some new players but not as many as hoped. Yet if one just chats about bridge in the social circle in which you move, many people are playing bridge at home and online casual games are still attracting vast numbers of players. It still seems extremely difficult to draw younger newcomers to the game, schools here are not offering bridge as an extra curricular activity, and folk are not taking the game up at university as happened in the past. The pace of life has got quicker since I was a child and with the emergence of technology, computers and cellphones have become an essential and the games associated with them are increasing in popularity. If anyone has any ideas on how we can attract this younger generation to the game please let us know. I feel my son would be good at bridge as he has the right kind of brain, but with a high powered job and school-going children, he simply could not fit it into his busy schedule. I think another fact we must consider is that people play bridge for many different reasons. If we take The Links Saturday afternoon sessions for example, the 'A' row are competitive and work hard at their game, keeping personal scoresheets and going over hands afterwards with their partners and often seeking advice from top players on how a particular hand should have been bid and/or played, while 'B' row contains some players like this but many who are happy just to be there and aspiring to get 50%, and the 'C' row has players who enjoy the game, like the fact they are exercising their brains in a fun way, and will enjoy the social contact there and enjoy a lovely tea! Nothing wrong with any of this and all are welcome of course!

In a casual conversation with Di Rosslee this last Saturday afternoon, I heard about their experience at the HCL International Bridge Championships in New Delhi, India. This boasts the biggest amount of prize money globally and attracts an entry of over 1000 participants making up over 150 teams with people coming from Australia, New Zealand, the US and many different European countries. Over 22 different countries in all. Di and Craig were paired with an Indian couple and finished 9th in their Teams Event, a very good finish. The team who won the whole event were composed of two Indians,

an Australian and a New Zealander. Di said it was most professionally organised (the lunches so good there was no need for a big supper). I thought their website and bulletins were well presented, both informative and entertaining. If anyone competes elsewhere interesting like this please let me know so I can share through our Newsletter.

Yours in bridge,

Deirdre Ingersent Cell No: 082 430 4140 and email: dingersent51@gmail.com

Betty Ravenscroft runs a successful and popular bridge club based at Blairgowrie Community Centre and serves on the GBU Committee - Nbc@Blairgowrie

We meet once a week at Blairgowrie Community Centre, we are fortunate to have a number of High caliber players that support us on a Wednesday, and give of their expert advice .

I like to think that Blairgowrie NBC is a friendly and competitive club, come and give it a try, we start at 09h30.

The SABF calendar has been full this year with Congress, Trials for the World Pairs, so we have been unable to have The Gill Brown Day, which we are hoping to have in March 2026.

We also have a Teams event that runs from February to November, we currently have two sections of 10 teams in each section.

Owing to popular demand, beginner bridge players have asked for a weekday in the evening a Tuesday evening 18h30 - 20h30, starting on the 13 of January, at a cost of R50 per player, to play and get confidence, we have been given a room at Blairgowrie, that looks like it may work.

Please contact me should you be interested.

Betty Ravenscroft 083 564 3050. bridge@blairgowrie is our website address

The 3rd edition of the **PETRA MANSELL** event was held on the the 18th and 19th of October at the Mount Edgecombe Country Club.

34 pairs competed for the 1st prize of R5000. Pairs from around the country competed.

The two time defending champions Val Bloom and Neville Eber held a significant lead after two rounds. Going into the last round Chris Bosenberg and Hennie Fick had closed the gap, leaving the last round as a shoot out.

Val and Neville held on to score their successive 3rd win in this event. Carol Stanton, once again, ensured a smooth running event!

Submitted by Mark Oliff

REPORT-BACK ON BENONI NORTHERNS FULL DAY BRIDGE COMPETITION held on SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 28th

This was planned by our all lady Bridge Committee of 7 and indeed many meetings had been held in preparation. Sadly, there was a smaller entry than in previous years but eventually 11 full tables. In recent years this had been made an Open event in order to give our regular Club players some different opposition. It was

theoretically open to all but no posters were sent out and it was really through word of mouth that our outside players heard about it. We were pleased to welcome a group of players from Johannesburg and other Benoni people, mostly from Jack's Club. It was a blue point event. At R150 per person entry fee it was excellent value for money offering a full day of bridge (48 boards in total) scored on Bridgemates, lunch and excellent morning and afternoon teas, and cash prizes for winners and a vast number of random prizes given away perhaps by wearing a lucky number or bidding and making a slam! It went off very well and a good sense of camaraderie prevailed throughout. Maybe another year it could be advertised more widely and be opened up to a wider variety of bridge players.

Congratulations to all our prize winners!

STUART and LINDA McDOUGALL were extremely consistent and thoroughly deserved to be the OVERALL WINNERS! These are out - of - towners! We hope you will come again to defend your title.

Other prize winners were:

PATRICIA EVE and DEIRDRE INGERSENT; ANN SCHREIBER and DIANA BOUDEWYNS; DI ENGLAND and ALBERT VAN LIER; PAT NEUMANN and JUDY SPANNENBERG

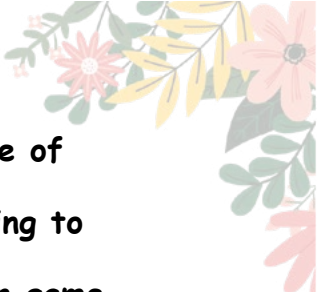

N.B. An interesting fact for perhaps other folk looking to organise a bridge event! In order to spread the prizes around a decision was made some years back a pair could only receive one prize and obviously this was upheld here otherwise Stuart and Linda could have walked off with almost all the cash as they did well in both sessions!

Report submitted by Deirdre Ingersent





Our Benoni Northerns Tournament

- 1. The busy hall*
- 2. The busy organiser Deirdre Ingersent*
- 3. The winners Linda and Stuart McDougall. He is using the bridgemate*
- 4. Two of the entrants, Albert Van Lier and Bridie Bullen-Smith, earnestly discussing their system!*



Bridge is considered more difficult than Chess because of the human element involved. When bidding you are trying to communicate with your partner unlike Chess, a one person game.

There is often more than one valid option though there is usually a best one. There is also an element of probability, the need to assess danger and the taking on of risk.



Judgment is important and a good bridge player with this quality will regularly beat average or bad players.

THE LINKS BRIDGE CLUB

The Links Bridge Club has, since the start of 2024, run a yearly **BBO Masterpoint Race**, with some generous BBO\$ Prizes for the winners of their respective “Brackets”. Brackets are based on a player’s average % from the previous year. 2025’s Race is nearing the end, and the list below has the top 10 players from each bracket, as of 22 October 2025.

To see the full list, visit <https://www.bridgewebs.com/links/>

With just over 2 months left, there are still many daily tournaments left to play, so see if you can get into your bracket’s top 10!

Submitted by Rob Stephens

BRACKET**MASTERPOINT RACE - LEADERS****POINTS**

A	Merle Modlin	120.30
A	Neville Eber	90.91
A	Val Bloom	75.20
A	Tom Collinge	66.28
A	Ellie Hanlon	59.77
A	Laureen Harris	54.04
A	Sharon Izarel	53.25
A	Joan Fihrer	52.87
A	Ghita Sandler	52.41
A	Pamela Murinik	51.67
K	Delys Shepard	92.38
K	Sam Trocki	91.33
K	Helene Roberts	85.08
K	Howard Strauss	73.54
K	Ian Katz	67.60
K	Irene Sundelson	57.07
K	Tracy Kaplan	53.01
K	Machelle Shapiro	50.88
K	Merlyn Munro	45.98
K	Marion Brivik	41.67
Q	Ilona Mervis	39.35
Q	Sue Malcomess	37.21
Q	Linda Bloch	29.78
Q	Jackie Solovei	22.36
Q	Mary Smith	20.96
Q	Sandra Jacobs	19.90
Q	Kalle	19.87
Q	Tricia Owen	19.21
Q	Sharon Kahn	17.73
Q	Judy Rothschild	17.60
J	Phyllis Rubin	9.50
J	Paul Rome	8.16
J	Jill Magid	6.87
J	Patricia Stapleton	4.68
J	Linda Schmulian	4.21
J	Michael Rapp	3.87
J	Myra Felsher	3.73
J	Gail Hurry	3.64
J	Arlene Ketz	3.61
J	Jennifer Marcus	3.49

THE BRIDGE LOUNGE

by Jeff Sapire

When we examine the very advanced plays, squeezes and end-plays come to mind. Squeeze play can be a complex business, but end-plays are far more common and in many cases are not beyond the average player. All it requires is a bit of basic technique, and often things will turn out well because of a particular lie of the cards.

South dealer, both vul

NORTH

S Q106

H AK843

D 62

C AK6

WEST

S K

H 65

D KQ10853

C Q1074

EAST

S AJ8732

H -

D 974

C J982

SOUTH

S 954

H QJ10972

D AJ

C 53

South	North	
2H	4H	Opening lead: DK

The bidding was brisk – South opened a weak two which North raised directly to game.

Declarer took the ace, drew trumps and then stopped to think about things. With nine tricks on top, he figured that the best shot would be to play West for the jack of spades, leading low towards dummy and inserting the nine. In isolation this is clearly the best way to tackle the suit, but here West took the king, cashed the queen of diamonds and got out with a club. When declarer played a second spade and West showed out, his goose was cooked, losing a diamond and three spades.

Declarer deserved what he got – a little advance preparation would have seen him home. After drawing the two trumps, what does it cost to eliminate the club suit first? Play A-K and another club, ruffing in hand, and now exit with the jack of diamonds, which you know West is going to have to win. He can cash the king of spades, but that's it – he is truly end-played, forced to play a club or a diamond, giving you a ruff and discard (ruff in dummy and discard a losing spade from hand), for the game going trick.

You may say that declarer was very lucky in that West was dealt the singleton king of spades (it could have been the ace too), because with Kx or Kxx he could have continued spades. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, goes the saying, and so it is in bridge. If he had more than one spade you were always going down, no matter what. But give yourself a chance and strip away the side suit just in case there is a favourable layout.

Thoughts on the WORLD NATIONAL BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS held in DENMARK.

As told to Deirdre Ingersent by Roz Bernstein

Firstly, and most importantly, Roz enjoyed the whole event and went with the realistic expectation of gaining experience in the world arena and not expecting to do very well.



The hall where the event was held

It was held in a small town away from Copenhagen and the actual venue was very nice. Of course everything was expensive because everyone knows our Rands are a weak currency against most countries in the world. However Roz noticed that several cost-cutting exercises had been employed by the organisers. The whole event was shortened by a day and the Opening Ceremony turned out to be rather something and nothing with all teams, well dressed in their blazers, introduced and national anthems played, but no snacks or drinks to follow! Sadly no Vugrah Room with commentators and live discussions on the hands was available this time. Roz said she had found this so interesting before and the place to be when you were not actually playing yourself. All one could do was sit alone somewhere and watch the various matches online.

However the bridge organisation itself was superb. Twenty Four teams competed in each Section and it was run as a total Round Robin, 16 boards against every country. She used two adjectives to describe this - High

Tech, with tablets at your table to be used, and Professional, T.D.'s were immediately at your table when summoned and efficient when answering queries. Alerting was both important and strictly done. There was absolutely no talking at the table and answers to system inquiries were to be written down. The organisers were very strict about the draw of names (which pairs were playing) which had to be submitted not more than 10 minutes after the previous match had been completed. The SA Ladies team played on a fair rotational basis.

Other general observations made by Roz included there were more younger players on the scene (many European countries were fielding ladies in the 30 or 40 age group), and the countries known to be stronger competitors used both coaches and non playing captains. As regards systems, a Club Transfer system was used by many countries and opening the bidding on lighter hands popular and these intervening bids obviously made it harder for one to get into the correct contract. Some were using a 14 - 16 NT, England still a weak NT and 4 card majors. Roz commented the stronger players seemed to know when exactly was the correct time to bid with a weaker hand.



The ladies team so smart in their blazers

From left to right: Sharon Lang, Vanessa Armstrong, Lotte Sorenson, Tas Nestoridis, Carol Stanton and Roz Bernstein

It is felt that South African players generally are at a drawback having no nearby events to go to for good competition while the European countries are closer together geographically and can travel around to find strong events. Online events are not the same as face to face. It must be rather daunting to turn up at an event using screens which we rarely do here. Also Roz felt many pairs were long time established partnerships whereas one of our pairs was a new one and another a fairly new partnership. Our ladies team had practised as much as they possibly could before the event, against local strong opposition, but other countries have camps established so they are not so 'cold' starting out on the first few matches but have had a 'warm up'. To return to the opening sentence, a good experience and it is definitely an honour to represent one's country. We South African bridge players are proud of you even if none of our teams performed as well as we would have liked them to!

P.S. In an event held after the World Team Championships, called Transnational Teams which attracted an entry of over 100 teams, a South African team composed of Craig Gower and Di Rosslee, Hennie Fick and Carol Stanton with sometimes Neville Eber too, played in this and reached the Knock Out stages, i.e. the last 16, where they were unfortunate to draw the best qualifying team there in the first round of play and were duly knocked out. However a very good achievement to reach that stage and their final finishing position was 12th.

Well done!



"Should we have a post mortem?"

DARLING DAISY'S TIPS FOR BEGINNERS!

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNTING

There are two facets to counting - both points and shape are important. An expert player seems to know exactly what to do in those situations which involve a guess. He is right far more often than not and is able to counteract those sayings such as 'eight ever, nine never' with correct judgement.

EXAMPLE No 1 (importance of points)

North	South
S KJ53	S Q109642
H AQ	H KJ
D A1032	D KJ6
C 962	C J10

The Contract was 4 Spades after West had opened a weak NT (12 - 14 points) The lead was Ace Clubs followed by King and Queen. The Queen was ruffed. Declarer now thinks correctly here are 9 points so West must have Ace spades for his bid so he will be quite safe to assume the Q Diamonds is in the East hand. One should be particularly alert to counting points if an opponent has made a limit bid during the auction, or has passed and then shown up with a significant number of HCP.

Counting Shape. If you can work out how many cards an opponent holds in 3 suits you automatically know his length in the 4th suit. Opportunities to count shape exist more often than one would think.

EXAMPLE No 2 (importance of shape)

North	South
S 10	S K9
H 52	H AK74
D AQJ9	D 8432
C A87643	C K52

South opened 1NT (weak 12 - 14 points) raised by North to 3NT, probably thinking his clubs will become tricks. West leads the Spades 2 (4th highest) and it is won by K spades. Next declarer tries Ace clubs followed by the King clubs, West showing out. Now stop and think about West's hand. Since he led from an assumed 4 card suit and has only a singleton club, his shape would seem to be 4 4 4 1. To make the contract 4 diamond tricks are needed. Start by finessing the J diamonds and then return to your hand using Ace hearts and finesse for 9 diamonds. Now return to your hand using King hearts as an entry and play for marked diamond finesse again. Your tricks taken are 1 spade, 2 clubs, 4 diamonds and 2 hearts - exactly right for 3NT.

2. THE OPENING LEAD

For beginners, defence is usually considered the hardest skill to master. Since you can't see your partner's

hand it is very difficult to co-ordinate the combined campaign. Beginners are often quoting guidelines which can contradict each other and therefore be confusing. For example one often hears 'lead your longest suit' against a NT contract but if your only long suit has been bid by declarer should you? Possibly correct if you have a definite entry . . .

Here is an interesting example of what to lead against a 4Hearts contract where spades were bid first and clubs before the hearts were bid and a final contract of 4hearts was found. 1S P 2C P 2H P 3H P 4H.

The defender needing to lead held these cards:

S Q10832

H 4

D A J2

C J764

No textbook lead available so start from a totally different viewpoint. Which leads can you rule out?

A spade from Q10832, declarer's first bid suit, is very likely to waste a trick and help declarer establish spades.

Leading from the miserable club holding is pointless. Declarer has at most 4 minor suit cards in his hand. Don't let him discard losing diamonds on Dummy's Club winners.

A trump lead has a lot to recommend it when the opposition are likely to be in a 4-4 trump fit with cross-ruffing potential but there are two good reasons to avoid a heart lead. Firstly, your singleton trump means that partner probably has a Q x x x or J x x x holding in hearts and your lead will expose the layout. Secondly your spade length means that if declarer tries to ruff spades in dummy your partner could maybe overruff.

And so to diamonds. The unbid suit. Lead the Ace diamonds as there may not be many of these cards around in declarer's hand or the dummy's hand. It could be seen as the least of evils!

This Ace diamonds could well be wrong but it was a decision taken logically. A 'clear' thinker rather than just doing something by rote often works. Keep a 'clear' head and plan again from what you now see. Avoid at all costs the habit of so many defenders of switching wildly from one suit to another under the misapprehension that they must do something now to keep the lead and defeat the contract. Experience shows that far more contracts, especially part scores, can be defeated by passive defence. It cannot be stressed enough how LISTENING TO THE BIDDING is of such great importance. Another important point to think about is how strong players, whether declarer or a defender stop after the first trick before playing to the next one!

More about this in my next Newsletter!

Submitted by Deirdre Ingersent

Cell No: 082 430 4140 and email: dingersent51@gmail.com

