

TABLE TALK

Otago Bridge Club: May 2007

President's Message

We are very proud that so many of our players are in National Teams, some to be travelling overseas: Graeme Stout and Jeff Miller are in the New Zealand Open team and Nick Bailey and James Coutts, Cameron Benson and Annabelle Molloy are in the New Zealand Youth team, all to play in Indonesia in June, while Arleen Schwartz and Chris Ackerley are in the Seniors team which will be playing in Christchurch in the Zone 7 Championships. Congratulations to all. This is an expensive business for the players concerned and we are planning a fund raising evening of bridge on 26 May, perhaps more particularly for the youth players. Please support this.

Everyone seems to be happy with our new web site. Thanks to those concerned. If you have anything you think should be going on to it, please let Martijn know. The Otago/Southland Centre also now has a web site, currently looked after by Sharon.

In March, 12-person teams (four Junior players, four Intermediate and four Open) from Invercargill, Oamaru, Otago and Winton contested to find a winner for the Interclub Teams to be played at Congress. Invercargill was the winner this year, but our twelve players did their best and enjoyed the day's play. Last month the Centre ran the Novice and Junior teams at Balclutha for less experienced players, and we fielded a team in each. Our Novice team was second to Balclutha.

As numbers have been low for Saturday night bridge, the keen Saturday players have decided that we need to go back to once a month, and hope that lots of people attend. To make it easier to remember, we shall have the last Saturday of the month. This night may be used for fund raising and indeed will be this month. Please contact Joy Turvey or Barbara Cowie with any questions.

We are trying out the real coffee machine in the foyer. Many people said that they would like such a machine, but the sales are not very large at present. We are trying \$1 per cup at present, but this may have to increase. We placed the machine where it is so that players will not annoy the room when they want a coffee during play. You do not have to wait until supper time! However it would be helpful if you take the cup to the slide at some stage. The plastic cups are too small.

It is pleasing to see so many players coming along each night. Remember that your convenor is on the playing committee, and if you want any matter brought up, tell him or her, and it will be discussed at that committee and if necessary brought to the main committee. The exception is the Junior convenor who is on the Promotion Committee. But most Junior players see plenty of me and can bring any matters to my attention.

All the best for good bridge in the coming weeks,
Lindsay Lawrence

Tournament Results

Taiari 8B Pairs – 21 April

2nd: Patricia Haden – Donna Ruwhiu
3rd_[JF1]: Nick Bailey – James Coutts
4th: Margaret Archer – Estelle Maxwell

Murihiku Pairs – 6 May

1st: Chris Ackerley – Arleen Schwartz
2nd: Nick Bailey – James Coutts
5th: Michael Atkinson – Donna Ruwhiu

New Zealand Trials

Easter weekend often means New Zealand trials. This year was no different as players from the Otago club and all round the country converged on the Auckland Bridge Club in Remuera to fight it out for the prize of international travel and representation. We (Annabelle Molloy, Cameron Benson, Nick Bailey and myself) arrived on Sunday morning for the youth trials to discover that Chris Ackerley – Arleen Schwartz were just hanging on in the Seniors trials and Jeff Miller – Graeme Stout had got off to an excellent start in the Open section and were in second place.

Our first match was against Benson-Molloy, a typical blood-splattered Youth encounter with 6 of the 16 contracts being doubled, 2 of which were cold and one of which was made. “A nervous start” I hear you say? Au contraire, this was just an indication of things to come. Our second match was against Hamiltonians Glass-Wagstaff, and featured this hand, all vulnerable:

♠ AJ97432
♥ T
♦ A7
♣ 963

♠ 6
♥ KQJ98432
♦ JT85
♣ -

♠ QT5
♥ A
♦ K96432
♣ J87

♠ K8
♥ 765
♦ Q
♣ AKQT542

N	E (Nick)	S	W (Me)
-	-	-	4H
pass	pass	5C	all pass

I led the Q♥ for count, which Nick overtook with his singleton Ace and found the excellent switch of the K♦, taking the A♦ entry from dummy to prevent the ♠ suit being set up. As a result declarer had to fall back on the losing ♠ finesse and went one off.

Our aggressive style of bidding got us to a 16-point 4S game on the following hand:

N (Nick) S (me)
♠ K873 ♠ AJ964
♥ - ♥ AQ93
♦ 973 ♦ T642
♣ QT7532 ♣ -

N (Nick)	E	S (me)	W
-	-	1S ¹	pass
4S ²	X ³	all pass	

- 1: 9-13 HCP, 5+ ♠
- 2: Can be either values or preemptive
- 3: Not a chance – I have 20 HCP!

A favourable ♥ lead from West enabled me to wrap up an overtrick and 9imps. In the same set we had a system triumph on a hand that many pairs found difficult to bid:

N (Nick) S (me)
♠ AKT96 ♠ -
♥ JT2 ♥ AK543
♦ Q732 ♦ AJ5
♣ 3 ♣ AKQT8

N (Nick)	E	S (me)	W
1S ¹	pass	1NT ²	pass
2D	pass	2H	pass
3H ³	pass	6H	all pass

- 1: 9-13, 5+ ♠
- 2: Game Forcing, any shape
- 3: 6340 / 5341 shape, better than 4H

The play posed no problems with a club lead round to my ten, ruff a club to the table, pitch two ♦s on AK♠, with a ♥ finesse available for 13 tricks. Many Open pairs found themselves languishing in 3NT or 5D after North opened a weak 2-suited 2S and much of the bidding space was gone. A 25-4 in this match meant we had to take a ‘tactical’ loss against Fraser Rew and John Whyte to make sure we got the sought-after bye first thing on Tuesday morning. Our second match against Rew-Whyte saw the uncommon convention ‘Grand Slam Force’ come up:

N (Nick) S (me)
♠ T8 ♠ AQJ9
♥ AJ9874 ♥ KQ5
♦ A2 ♦ KQ73
♣ AQ9 ♣ KJ

N (Nick)	E	S (me)	W
-	-	2NT ¹	pass
3D ²	pass	3H	pass
5NT ³	pass	7H ⁴	all pass

- 1: 20-22 – I promise, there’s 20 in there somewhere...
- 2: Transfer to ♥
- 3: GSF: “Do you have 2 of the top 3 honours?”
- 4: Yes!...and a claim at Trick 1 followed. A battle throughout the second round robin eventually resulted in Nick and I coming out winners over Rew-Whyte, with Cameron and Annabelle finishing a clear third over the other entrants. For us this means a trip to Bandung, Indonesia for the Pacific Asian championships at the start of June. Ackerley-Schwartz were selected to enter stage two of the senior trials, where they made up quite a deficit to finish in the top four, and were rewarded with a trip to the Zone 7 Championships in Christchurch this month. *Continued over page*

The most impressive success story of the weekend was that of Miller-Stout, who produced an outstanding performance to finish second in the Open section, being at the top of the field throughout. They will attend both the Zone 7 and PABF events, and along with Ackerley-Schwartz have chances of selection in the New Zealand contingent to travel to the Bermuda Bowl in Shanghai, China later in the year.

James Coutts

For coverage of the PABF tournament in Bandung go to www.pabf2007.org - Ed.

Chief Director's Corner

What is a psychic bid or psyche? It is an intentional and major distortion of your bidding system. According to the English Bridge Union, it is *a deliberate and gross mis-statement of honour strength and/or suit length*.

For example, you might (a) open 1NT with 3 points. Or with a 1-4-4-4 hand (singleton spade) and 12 points you might (b) bid 1 Spade. Or you might (c) overcall an opposing opening bid of 1 Heart with 1 NT having nothing but 7 clubs to the KQ.

Notice the word “deliberate” in the EBU definition: if you make one of these bids inadvertently that is not good, but it is a misbid rather than a psyche. A deliberate but *minor* mis-statement of honour strength and/or suit length is not a psyche but a deviation: for example you might open a 10-point hand, or you might be stuck for a rebid and bid a 4-card suit twice, promising 5 cards.

Why on earth would you want to make a completely inaccurate bid like the three examples above? Take example (a). Suppose you are 3rd in hand non-vulnerable against vulnerable, there have been two passes, and you are the proud possessor of a balanced hand with 3 points. You know partner has less than 12 points so the opponents have a likely game, and 4th hand is marked with lots of points. You may decide to take a risk and open 1 NT, hoping to scramble out for a 500 penalty at the 2 level. Now this is a severe risk as you may go for much bigger penalty, and your partner and teammates will not be pleased, but you may, once in three times perhaps, get away with it. If you need a good board it may be worth the risk.

Take example (b). It would be crazy to open this hand 1 Spade, but if partner opened 1 Diamond it is

conceivable a 1 Spade bid would prevent a spade lead against 3 NT. If partner had hearts you would not be popular. Or take example (c): when you are doubled, and perhaps partner redoubles, you run out to 2 Clubs. This used to be called the “comic” 1 NT. If partner doubles the opponents, you just have to keep running out to clubs! Then your psyche is “exposed”, but you may have muddied the waters enough to confuse everyone else.

Notice the operative “everyone else”: you may confuse the opponents but you will also confuse partner! But a psychic bid is a legitimate tactic as long as it contains the same element of surprise for the psycher's partner as it does for the opponents. This type of bid is not cheating, and is allowed for in the Rules, provided that such a call is not based on a partnership understanding. You are not allowed to have systemic psyches or an understanding, not disclosed to the opponents, that psyches are likely. The psycher's partner is expected to bid according to system until the psyche is obvious to all.

If you feel a psyche has been unfair you can ask the Director to make a ruling. This is especially the case if the psycher's partner appears to have “fielded the psyche” by not making a clear-cut bid according to system. A standard example is: pass pass 1 Spade 1NT. Here the first player, having passed with a flat 11 point hand, must double for penalties even if they feel that the 1 Spade opener is a psyche, in other words they must bid as if the opener is genuine until the bidding ends or the psyche becomes clear. If the partner does this then the Director will normally take no action to penalize the psyche.

Here are some relevant extracts from the NZCBA Manual. You may depart from agreed partnership methods in an attempt to deceive the opponents as long as partner is unaware of the violation. The opponents have no recourse if they are misled or damaged by the psychic bid unless they can establish that they were given an incomplete or erroneous explanation of your methods. HOWEVER if your bidding or play is inconsistent with your explanation of partner's bidding, you lay yourself open to an accusation of improper conduct and if challenge must establish that your subsequent actions were based on your opponents' bidding or play or from your own cards and NOT from a concealed partnership agreement.

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Persistent psyching is not permitted (more than two deliberate gross mis-descriptions per session). You are not permitted to psyche a Multi 2 Club or Multi 2 Diamond bid, or a strong artificial bid such as an Acol 2 Club or Precision 1 Club opener.

So much for the NZCBA position. In our Club we have a system of recording psyches. The perpetrator is required to fill in a psyche form, with details, and the Director is to ensure that this is done. Failure to submit a psych form will be penalized. A list of recorded psyches in the last couple of years will be posted on the Club notice board if there are no objections. We hope that psyches will occur only between comparable opponents. At the moment most psyches happen in the Open Division, and we would hope that these players would use discretion against weaker opposition. But remember that these bids are a legitimate part of the game and can lead to exciting if unorthodox bridge.

Dennis McCaughan

Upcoming Tournaments

2-3-4 June – Christchurch Congress

16 June – Taieri Pairs 5A

30 June – Otago Winter Teams 5A

1 July – Otago Winter Pairs 5A