

Table Talk

Otago Bridge Club: May 2009

Web matters

The club website, designed and maintained by John Shanks of Spacific Design, at <http://otagobridgeclub.org.nz/> is going from strength to strength. As well as results, and hand records, two new features have recently been added. The first is a “Forum” – an opportunity for extended discussion of bridge hands (bidding or play), and including a section designated for beginners and learners. A recent discussion in that section of the forum has dealt with how to handle a slam investigation when one of the two hands has great playing strength (a running eight card suit, and a side ace) while the other has controls in the remaining suits. These combinations frequently produce many more tricks than their combined point count might suggest, and recognizing hands that are much more powerful than indicated by their point count is an important advance for many players. The bidding section of the forum has also seen a number of interesting threads – many dealing with borderline situations, at the part score vs. game, or game vs. slam boundaries. A forum is only as strong as the members who take part, by starting or replying to threads. So, while lurkers are welcome, please feel free to post questions of your own, or to follow up on those that others have posted.

The most recent addition to the web site is a partnership board. This provides the possibility for any member of the club to post a message either seeking a partner for one (or more) evenings or events at the club; or to announce his or her availability to play. Again, you are encouraged to make use of this service whenever you need a partner; or find yourself at a loose end – the more activity there is on the board, the more effective a tool it will be.

Of course we also welcome any additional suggestions for improvements to the web site.

Phone number changes

Ackerley, Chris	455 4532
Aitken, Viv	453 4664
Barron, Enid	467 9081
Blakeley, Matt	477 4051
Bosworth, Shirley	455 0646
Ellis, Judith	466 7744
Fudge, Jared	0276 988 722
Hollick, Suzanne	489 8676
Hydes, Steve	454 2526
Joseph, David	456 3922
Knox, Colleen	454 2023
Leefe, Nic	489 1091
McPeake, Rhonda	454 3095
McPeake, Stuart	454 3095
O’Neill, Mary	474 0914
Parker, Frank	467 2166
Prent, Martijn	454 2415
Russell, Marion	467 5331
Samson, Christine	489 7255
Thomson, Heather	466 7811
Tingle, Edie	(alt) 0274 766 075
Weir, Amanda	454 5391
Wesselingh, Stephen	03 465 1954

Oink oink!

I played the Easter pairs with David Stewart. At one point during the first session one of our opponents refused to support his partner’s bid of spades holding ♠AJT7 ♥KQ9652 ♦4 ♣AT and insisted on repeating his hearts. After they had left the table I ruminated to David that hogmanship was alive and well. But a few hands later I was hoist on my own petard when I managed to declare a heart contract holding a yarborough and three trumps only – whereas David had a 27 HCP monster. This was the hand:

Dealer: S	♠ AKJ	Vul: Both
	♥ AJ643	
	♦ AKT	
	♣ AK	
♠ T4		♠ Q732
♥ K987		♥ Q
♦ J9		♦ Q864
♣ JT983		♣ Q762
	♠ 9865	
	♥ T52	
	♦ 7532	
	♣ 54	

Our bidding, with opponents silent, had been P-2♦, 2♥-2NT, 3♣-3♥, 4♥-P. David began with a multi 2♦ which my RHO asked about. I gave the options in our agreement the last of which (25+ HCP) comes up so rarely that I smiled as I said it. But the incredible had happened and, after a puppet Stayman sequence, we played in 4♥ with me as declarer. Dummy was something of a disappointment (I mean it! I had been hoping to ruff a club in my hand). I duly went down one because, even though my opponents gave me a chance to make it, I didn't take full advantage (Don't ask – or, better, ask David who betrayed not a sign of disappointment that he was dummy).

It was somewhat disheartening to open the score sheet and find that most pairs had declared 3NT by North making. But worse was to follow. In the hand records afterwards I saw that Deep Finesse claimed that 3NT should go down but 4♥ could make. Against 3NT played by North the fatal club lead is perhaps not so easy to find, but it took me ages to work out the line to make 4♥ declared by either hand.

The main line requires the opening lead to be won, two top clubs cashed, and a low trump to be conceded to ♥Q. East's only safe return is a low diamond which forces West's ♦J. Then comes a heart to South's ♥T which West must win. The return is won and then three rounds of trumps follow.

No matter what has happened East is in trouble. East has to keep the same length as North in spades and diamonds. If East has a winner in either of these suits he can be thrown in to lead away from his guard in the other suit.

It is essential to make the bizarre play of losing the first trump to East's bare ♥Q. For suppose West has started with a spade lead. Then, when West gets in again with her second trump she can lead spades again. Now the throw-in fails because, if thrown in with a spade, East can exit a diamond while West still has the ♦J.

Hands with 27 HCP are rare indeed. In my own experience I've only ever seen one stronger hand. This was a 28 pointer that I held playing with Chris Ackerley several years ago. When Chris and I discussed this afterwards he pointed out the paucity of intermediate cards and memorably described my magnificent hand as "a poor 28 point hand"!

Mike Atkinson

Credit where it's due

In an ideal world we would all behave ethically. In the microcosmic bridge world new players (and even some seasoned players) are not always aware of all the niceties of bridge propriety and so it was a pleasure recently for me to witness an occasion where one of my opponents leaned over backwards to behave correctly. The player in question was Elaine Donaldson who saw her partner make a 1NT rebid apparently showing 15-16 HCP. However it was obvious to all at the table because of an inadvertent gesture by her partner that she in no way had the values for her bid. Elaine holding a balanced 10 count, resolutely raised to 3NT knowing full well that the contract was destined to fail. Congratulations, Elaine; we should strive to educate all our members to behave as well as you.

Mike Atkinson