Bulletin 2

Sunday 5th January

Session Times Today

Pairs Final/Consolation 10:30am-6:30pm Scavenger Hunt After dinner

Session Times Tomorrow

Youth Teams Emma's Bridge 10:30am-6:30pm After dinner





Congratulations to the winners of the Pairs Qualifying: Alex Goss - Bertie Morgan (North/South) and Duncan Lai - Aadhi Hariharan (East/West).

| Pairs Qualifying Scores | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| North / South | | |
| Rank | Name | Score |
| 1 | ALEX GOSS - BERTIE MORGAN | 61.57% |
| 2 | ZARA CHOWDHURY - LIAM MINOGUE | 58.95% |
| 3 | HEATH WATKINS - MATTHEW SIEREDZINSKI | 57.80% |
| 4 | ZAC ROSS - KATE MACDONALD | 57.54% |
| 5 | DARREN BRAKE - ANDREW SPOONER | 57.25% |
| 6 | ZARIAS WERDER - LEON MEIER | 54.88% |
| 7 | NOAH KLUGMAN - SEBASTIAN REDIN | 51.46% |
| 8 | LAUREN MORGAN - PADDY TAYLOR | 51.09% |
| 9 | MOLLY MEEK - TIMOTHY OMVIG | 48.04% |
| 10 | GRACE GISSING - EMMA LANGFORD | 47.41% |
| 11 | MAISIE GOLD - TAYDON GOLD | 43.12% |
| 12 | RICKY CARTHEW - DYLAN WATKINS | 40.40% |
| 13 | JEREMY LIN - MOLLY LANGDON MACMILLAN | 36.22% |
| 14 | OLIVER BRAYSHAW - LIZZY BRAYSHAW | 34.27% |
| East/West | | |
| Rank | Name | Total |
| 1 | DUNCAN LAI - AADHI HARIHARAN | 61.10% |
| 2 | TOMER LIBMAN - DAMON FLICKER | 58.25% |
| 3 | JEREMY REID - SEB WRIGHT | 57.91% |
| 4 | EDMOND LEE - ALAN STONEHAM | 57.19% |
| 5 | | 37.1370 |
| <i>J</i> | ADRIAN LE - JADE WILKINSON | 53.42% |
| 6 | ADRIAN LE - JADE WILKINSON TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB | |
| _ | | 53.42% |
| _ | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB | 53.42% |
| 6 | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB LANGDON MACMILLAN | 53.42% 51.84% |
| 6 | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB LANGDON MACMILLAN ANNE DAVEY - FLETCHER DAVEY | 53.42% 51.84% 50.62% |
| 6 7 8 9 10 | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB LANGDON MACMILLAN ANNE DAVEY - FLETCHER DAVEY TAMATI GREIG - KAT HOLMES | 53.42% 51.84% 50.62% 49.84% 49.06% 48.68% |
| 6 7 8 9 10 11 | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB LANGDON MACMILLAN ANNE DAVEY - FLETCHER DAVEY TAMATI GREIG - KAT HOLMES MAXWELL ASHURST - ALEXIS WILSMORE | 53.42% 51.84% 50.62% 49.84% 49.06% |
| 6 7 8 9 10 | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB LANGDON MACMILLAN ANNE DAVEY - FLETCHER DAVEY TAMATI GREIG - KAT HOLMES MAXWELL ASHURST - ALEXIS WILSMORE MACKENZIE RHODES - GORDON ZHONG | 53.42% 51.84% 50.62% 49.84% 49.06% 48.68% 45.31% 43.90% |
| 6 7 8 9 10 11 | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB LANGDON MACMILLAN ANNE DAVEY - FLETCHER DAVEY TAMATI GREIG - KAT HOLMES MAXWELL ASHURST - ALEXIS WILSMORE MACKENZIE RHODES - GORDON ZHONG SAM ANGOVE - SAMUEL GOSS | 53.42% 51.84% 50.62% 49.84% 49.06% 48.68% 45.31% |
| 7 8 9 10 11 | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB LANGDON MACMILLAN ANNE DAVEY - FLETCHER DAVEY TAMATI GREIG - KAT HOLMES MAXWELL ASHURST - ALEXIS WILSMORE MACKENZIE RHODES - GORDON ZHONG SAM ANGOVE - SAMUEL GOSS JASSY CARTHEW - ELLENA BLACK | 53.42% 51.84% 50.62% 49.84% 49.06% 48.68% 45.31% 43.90% |
| 7 8 9 10 11 | TOM LANGDON MACMILLAN - SEB LANGDON MACMILLAN ANNE DAVEY - FLETCHER DAVEY TAMATI GREIG - KAT HOLMES MAXWELL ASHURST - ALEXIS WILSMORE MACKENZIE RHODES - GORDON ZHONG SAM ANGOVE - SAMUEL GOSS JASSY CARTHEW - ELLENA BLACK ALEXANDER WILKINSON - JAMIE | 53.42% 51.84% 50.62% 49.84% 49.06% 48.68% 45.31% 43.90% |

Happy 2025

For the mathematically inclined, you might find it interesting to note that our current calendar year is pretty amazing for a bunch of reasons:

- 2025 itself is a square number: $45 \times 45 = 2025$
- 2025 is a product of two square numbers: $5^2 \times 9^2 = 2025$
- 2025 is the sum of three square numbers: $5^2 + 20^2 + 40^2 = 2025$
- And finally, it is the sum of the cube of all the single digit numbers:

 $1^3 + 2^3 + 3^3 + 4^3 + 5^3 + 6^3 + 7^3 + 8^3 + 9^3 = 2025$

Suit Combinations Quiz

The lead is in dummy. What is the best play for one trick in this suit?

- ♦ Q43
- J95

If:

- a) Dummy has one outside entry?
- b) Dummy has no outside entry (the lead is in dummy for the last time right now)?

Answers later in the Bulletin.

The curse of the 4-3-3-3 hand

by Leigh Matheson

Board 26 of the Youth Pairs Qualification dealt North/South some big hands. With enough points to bid slam, plus a Major suit fit, what could possibly go wrong? (if in doubt, please refer to title)

Both Vul **♦** Q84 Dealer East **♥** J852 **♦** KQ4 ♣ KQJ **▲** A109752 **♦** 3 **♥** Q **v** 10973 **♦** 987 **♦** 1053 **♣** 542 ♣ 109763 **★** KJ6 **♥** AK64 ♦ AJ62 **♣** A8

At most tables, South opened 2NT. How should North plan the auction?

With 2NT showing roughly 20-22 points, depending on partnership agreement, North can see the partnership has 34-36 points. This is typically enough to bid a small slam, but not a grand slam. But with a potential 4-4 heart fit, should North go looking for a trump suit?

Normally with a 4-card Major, the answer is yes, and you should start with 3♣ (some version of Stayman). But with a 4-3-3-3 shape (and especially at Matchpoint scoring) it is frequently better to not bother. With this hand I'd expect most experts would simply raise to 6NT. Why?

Firstly, there is a lot to be said for bidding directly. It is good to have an honest conversation (i.e. the auction) with partner about what the best contract should be. But once the auction has ended, declarer should be sorry for every piece of information he has told his opponents, who can now use this to their advantage during the play of the hand. By not revealing much whenever there is

a choice of options you make your opponents' lives harder.

Secondly, even if you find a fit, what can you ruff? If partner has a 4-card side suit you would not want to risk the opponents ruffing, so you would have to start with drawing trumps and would not get a chance to use the suit profitably to discard losers in other suits.

Finally, as is the case here, bidding a trump suit has the added drawback that it might break badly.

On this deal exactly half the North/South field bid 6NT. True, it is only due to the lucky heart layout that allows this contract to make. But if the heart suit were less friendly and 6NT goes 1 down, it would still score one more trick than 6H, which is equally as lucrative at Matchpoint scoring.



2025 Youth Pairs in action

Puzzle Corner

Can you work out the following puzzles (solutions tomorrow):

MY1111LIFE

DECI SION

ROWHENME

SLIGHTLY CAST

Suit Combinations

by Leigh Matheson

A (single dummy) suit combination is simply a layout of two players' cards. This is often accompanied by a challenge to find the best line of play to win a certain number of tricks.

There are so many possible suit combinations in bridge that it is impossible to encounter them all in one lifetime, let alone memorise them all. What's more, bridge hands often require combining chances in multiple suits to maximise your chance of making your contract. Not to mention the auction often dictates that certain layouts are more likely than others.

So how do we know how to play a bridge hand? And is studying single suit combinations helpful at all?

Take this combination, for example:

♦ Q106543

♦ A2

You cash the $\triangle A$ and lead the $\triangle 2$, seeing only small cards from the opponents. With no hints from the auction, should you play the $\triangle Q$ or the $\triangle 10$?

If you spent half an hour at the bridge table working out the answer, you'd be a little embarrassed to find out that they both win the same percentage of the time.

At first you might conclude that it's a fools errand to analyse these combinations, but it's exactly these combinations that reveals what our approach should be: You don't need to find the best line of play always. Often the second-best line of play is just as good, or almost as good. So you want to find a way to choose a reasonable line of play and avoid all the silly ones.

When a difficult combination like this comes up, what I recommend you do is pick what look to be the two best lines, just on gut feel. Then do the calculation and work out which of the two is better and go with that one.

Practicing card combinations is a great way to improve your skill at calculating in this fashion.

There are not many card combinations that keep coming up again and again. The following is one of them:

- ♦ Q43
- ♦ J95

How do you play this suit?

If you know the answer, you might be surprised to hear that many good players lead low towards the $\bullet Q$ and low towards the $\bullet J$ (in either order), simply hoping that an opponent will jump in with an honour. But as long as both opponents play "second hand low", this play is unlikely to work. The presence of the $\bullet 9$ is often overlooked and it gives us a better play to score a trick.

Answer to combinations quiz at the start of the bulletin:

- a) With an outside entry to dummy, cross to hand and lead towards the ◆Q. After that loses, use your entry to dummy to lead towards the ◆9.
- b) With no outside entry you must lead towards the ◆9 now while you still can.

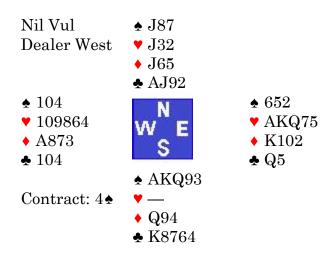
If the •10 is onside, you will force out a trick with the winning finesse. Why specifically lead low to the •Q first, where possible? Because by doing so you will also score a trick if either opponent has •AK10. This was the full deal I played yesterday:

E/W Vul **★** KJ6 Dealer South **♥** A87 J95 **♣** 10743 **♠** Q982 **★** 43 ♥ KQ1095 **♥** J62 ***** 82 ♦ AK1076 **♣** J5 **♣** Q82 **▲** A1075 Contract: 3♣ **4**3 Lead: ♥K **♦** Q43 ♠ AK96

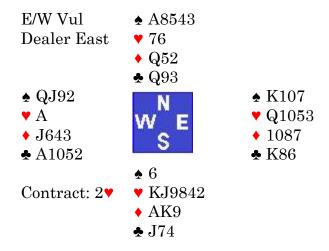
I won the second round of hearts and drew two rounds of trumps. Not wanting to spoil my chances in spades, I decided to forego the optimal way of playing the diamond suit and just lead low to the ◆9 here and now. After all, this is the best way to play the suit if you only have one entry. Alas, I went one down.

If I had taken the time to appreciate this layout better, I could have led a diamond towards hand before drawing trumps.

Don't believe me that this layout comes up often? Here are two more hands I played less than a month ago:



This time South has the ◆9, so we want to lead towards the ◆J in dummy, and after that loses, lead towards the ◆9 in hand.



This time it's the club suit and again, the best play of finessing the ♣9 on the second round works.

Curiously, the optimal line of play worked on all three hands, even though the actual chance of success is roughly 64%.