

21st Coffs Coast Gold Congress at Opal Cove Resort



1

Wednesday 12 August 2026

Editor: Nick Hughes

shevek3@gmail.com 0414 601 175 (text)

Recent numbers

(Numbers are capped at 90 tables)

	2024	2025	2026
Open Pairs	116	110	113
Restricted	60	68	66
Open Teams	64	58	58
Restricted	27	32	29

So slightly more in Restricted events, fewer in Open.

No right turn!

Heading **North** from Coffs Harbour to Opal Cove, you will need to drive **past the resort** to the **Solitary Islands Way / Sapphire Beach Exit**, cross on the overpass and take the **third** (last) exit to rejoin the highway and head back South.



Board movement

If you find yourself waiting for boards, the table behind you may be unable to keep up with your pace. The best thing to do is call over a caddie and ask for **the last board you are due to play**.

For instance, if you started with Board 12, the best board for the caddie to give you is 11. After you play 11, give it back to the caddie. **Don't send it on!**

You should be playing the boards in **sequence**. If a board comes to you out of sequence, there might be a problem. Call a caddie over to look for it. Otherwise, we might see five tables looking for that one board as the end of the session approaches.

Categories & masterpoints

All players in the **Intermediate** events must have fewer than 750 MPs as at 1-4-2026

All players in the **Restricted** section (sub-category of the Intermediate section) must have fewer than 300 MPs as at 1-4-2026.

Each 14-board match you win in the **Open** events will earn you **0.56 gold points** (around 0.50 in Restricted) plus outright points if you finish in the top **third** of the field.

Protected Pairs

In the **Restricted Events**, a pair playing a Green (natural) system may request that **Brown Sticker** conventions are not used against them. (That's **RCO Twos** and other ambiguous two openings, though the typical Multi 2♦ is **not** Brown Sticker).

Bridgemate scores

Don't leave the table without first confirming the completeness and validity of the data entered into the bridgemates. (Press **SCORES** at the end)

Food & Drink

Lunch is included on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Also, there are free drinks and snacks at the opening cocktail party and during the prize giving on Thursday and Sunday.

Coffee and tea are available for \$4 in the hotel foyer. Happy Hour at the bar is 5-6 pm, so after play.

Phones

Please ensure that mobile phones are on silent during play.

You can leave your phone with the Convener if you are expecting an urgent communication.

Leading from an ace

In **notrumps** it's normal and common for the opening leader to lead a low card – often fourth best – away from an ace.

When do you lead the ace instead?

Timetable

Tue	6pm	Cocktails
11	7pm	Welcome Pairs (\$10 at the table)

Swiss Pairs (8 x 14 bds)

Wed	9.30am	Pairs 1 & 2
12		Buffet lunch
	2.15pm	Pairs 3 & 4

Thu	9.30	Pairs 5 & 6
13		Buffet lunch
	2.15pm	Pairs 7 & 8
		Prize-giving

Friday morning forums

Fri	9.30	Directors' forum
14		with Laurie Kelso
	10.30	Workshops

Teams (8 x 14 bds)

Fri	2 pm	Teams 1 & 2
14		

Sat	9.30	Teams 3 & 4
15		Buffet lunch
	2.15pm	Teams 5 & 6

Sun	9 am	Teams 7 & 8
16		(Play will end at 12.30)
		Prize-giving
		Finish at 2pm

When you have a chunky holding like ♠AKJ75. You hope to take five tricks on the trot.

Say dummy has three small cards. Holding the queen, partner is supposed to play it under your ace, trusting you to have AKJ. If that doesn't happen, you might need to switch to another suit, hoping partner can get in to lead a spade through declarer's queen.

(Of course declarer's ♠Q might have been dropping doubleton. Ideally, partner – without the queen – would have **shown count**, which would tell you how many spades declarer was likely to have.)

With ♠AK432 it's generally better to lead low, even though that risks giving away at trick to declare or dummy's doubleton queen. These things happen.

Suit contracts

"What do you lead from Axxx against a suit contract?"

"Some other suit"

Lead ace from A-x is common enough, looking for a ruff when partner has the king, or the ace of trumps. Even so, if partner can't help, you lead will prove costly.

Leading from Axx is likely to blow a trick:

♥ Q54

♥ A76

♥ J1082

♥ K93

Whether you lead ace or small, declarer with take two heart tricks. If you lead something else, declarer is likely to lose two heart tricks.

Leading low can be costly, even when looks like it worked:

♥ KJ109

♥ A76

♥ Q854

♥ 32

On your opening lead of a low heart, declarer calls for dummy's nine. You can understand why partner withheld the queen. If declarer has the ace – as expected – playing the queen would give declarer all four heart tricks. Leading low from an ace is usually wrong, even when it's right!

Look at your leading habits from partner's point of view.

♥ J74

♥ 6 led

♥ K1053

♥ ?

In 4♠, declarer calls for dummy's ♥4 and you naturally insert the 10.

You hope partner has led from ♥Q96 or similar. Inserting the 10 will hold declarer to one heart trick..

Even if declarer has ♥AQx, all is not lost. You might still be able to hold declarer to two heart tricks. If you had played the king, declarer would have been gifted three easy tricks.

What you don't want to see is

♥ J74

♥ A986

♥ K1053

♥ Q2

Declarer shrugs and wins the ♥Q, draws trumps and says "Give you a heart". Sigh ...

When you lead low from an ace against a suit contract and partner "misdefends" it's your fault.

Note that the ♥6 lead to the 10 and queen would be perfectly fine against 3NT. Declarer gets one trick and your side gets three, whichever card East plays at trick one.

Notrumps can still be tricky.

♥ Q7

♥ A86 42

♥ K1053

♥ J9

If the first trick goes ♥4-7-10-J, partner will not be happy. East may say "What if the cards are like this:

♥ Q7

♥ J86 42

♥ K1053

♥ A9

If I play the king, it costs a trick."

That's true but if that's the layout, declarer would have called for dummy's ♥Q at trick one. Yes?

Not so easy!

Canberra ANC Winners

Open - NSW

Nigel Rosendorff - Peter Buchen
Michael Courtney - James Coutts
David Wiltshire - Bruce Neill
David Fryda (NPC)

Seniors - South Australia

David Anderson - Chris Lorimer
Kevin Lange - Phil Gallasch
Zoli Nagy - Russel Harms

Women - Western Australia

Jane Reynolds - Viv Wood
Cassie Morin - Cynthia Belonogoff
Kimberly Zhao - Dianne Dwyer
Allison Stralow (NPC)

Youth - NSW

Aadhi Hariharan - Adrian Le
Natalie Newman - Ida Andersen
Shannon Ooi - David Zheng
Mitch Dowling (NPC)

Open Butler

1st T Nunn - P Dalley
2nd S Ashton - L Milne
3rd W Lazer - P Gumby

Mixed Butler

1st J Reynolds - P Reynolds
2nd N Giura - N Hughes
3rd C Cullen - M Packer

Organiser

Brian Salisbury – 0427 719 172
chbsccpres@gmail.com

Convener

Helen Blewitt
helenblewitt@gmail.com

Recent Coffs winners

Last year

Pairs M Moren - J Mill
Intermediate F Gaunt - R Roark

Teams M Moren - J Mill
A Peake - G Mundell
Intermediate S Carter - N Gillies
P Ruan - L Jia

2024

Pairs J Mill & M Doecke
Intermediate L Gibbs & K Murray

Teams J Mill, M Doecke
J Williams, J Coutts
Intermediate K Rutter, D Robertson
M Robertson, C Dwan

2023

Pairs S & A Richman
Intermediate J Gudaitis & C Speller

Teams A Mill, J Mill
P Hollands, J Coutts
Intermediate O Goodman, J McGowan
V Brewis, M Yang

2022

Pairs L Milne & J Coutts
Intermediate S Miller & N Walsh

Teams J Mill, J Williams
L Milne, J Coutts
Intermediate P Griffin, J McFall
F Gaunt, R Roark



Justin Mill has been on the last four winning teams.