# Palmerston North Bridge Club Newsletter

June 2025



**From the Bridge**

Hi all ye,

Well, everything seems to be going just tickety-boo at the moment. Table numbers show that most members are practising their skills. I hope that winter chills do not affect us as the season gets cooler.

Thursday night is BACK!- with better numbers the last few nights-only to be interrupted by improver lessons. Alistair (James)is certainly pulling the crowds-both improvers and beginners. GO AL !!

The Restricted Pairs tournament has just this last Saturday- and what a joyous occasion to see a room full of expectant players. Juniors! -Don't be overawed by tournaments. There is much goodwill in the room and I must say the prizes-if you were so lucky-were extremely generous.

What a team we have arranging tournaments. Glynis has been the chief,but took on the catering role this time around (in the absence of Gayle-get well girl!) as well. What a hero and how quietly she goes about the business. Four cheers Glynis!!Thanks go to all who contributed. A very smooth event with appreciation showed by visitors.

If I may add to the tips given by Ray, Bob and Alistair: for juniors facing senior players. Work on your bidding, memorise and understand how it works. Senior players may have a few extras up their sleeves but the basic rules stay the same. This part of the game CAN quickly become your strong-point. Playing the cards may take longer to fathom and that is the joy.

A couple of tips of my own:

If you have opened 1NT or overcalled 1NT, your partner knows within a very small range how strong you are. It is up to partner to bid (if able) to make the most of that hand. You have nothing further to offer except to respond to a range-finder or transfer……. .

If you have played 500 you may be over fixated on winning with aces and kings. In bridge -learn to finesse. Maybe take the trick with a lesser ranked card. Aces and Kings are for taking 10s, jacks ,queens.

Bob Hurley has arranged a team of twenty- four across the grades to play the annual 3-way interclub at Wanganui (Sun 22 June ). We have our pride to resurrect here. school up with your partners all!

I reflect on how wondrously the functioning of our club unfolds. There are so many parts, duties here and there, each with a person or small team doing there thing. New members mixing in and showing enthusiasm. My heart sings. thank-you all.

Stay kind, be generous to those you cannot quite fathom.

Looking forward to more bridge.

**Martin Carryer**
**President**

### Tournament Results and 70% Club

Congratulations to club players who performed well in recent tournaments:

**Hutt Swiss Pairs**
Morgan Booker/Colin Hayward - 4th
**Masterton Open Pairs**
Morgan Booker/Anne Gordon - 2nd
**Wellington Congress Swiss Pairs**
Jack James/Bob Hurley - 4th
Anne Gordon/Liz Burrows - 5th
**Wellington Congress Provincial Pairs**
Jack James/Bob Hurley - 6th
**Easter Friday Fundraiser**
Jack James/George Masters - 1st
**Hastings Teams**
Jack James/J Potts/ S Smith/ G Masters - 1st
**Dannevirke Open**
Jack James/George Masters - 3rd
Anne Gordon/Bob Hurley- 4th
**Hokowhitu Intermediate Tourn**
Denise Servante/Margaret White - 1st
Hans van Bunnik/ Michael Hardman 4th
**Hokowhitu Junior Tournament**
Jono Naylor/John Redmayne - 2nd
Netty Keen/Janet Rogerson - 4th
**Palmerston North Intermediate Tourn**
Cindy Lowndes/Alistair James - 1st
Maureen Watts/Heather Simpson - 2nd
**Palmerston North Junior Tourn**
Patricia Henaghan/Gillian Humm - 1st
**Levin Easter Restricted Pairs**
Michael Hardman/Hans van Bunnik - 1st
Anita Thirtle/John Dodds - 3rd
**Paraparaumu Open**
Liz Burrows/Sandra Coleman - 2nd
**Victoria Multigrade**
Steve Baron/Mariusz Tumilowicz - 1st
**Kelly Pierce Memorial Teams**
Jack James/Wayne Burrows/M Curry/Ke Hu - 4th
**Taranaki Open Swiss**
Debbie Marcroft/Garry Hodge - 5th
**Marton Open**
Debbie Marcroft/Garry Hodge - 1st
Lorraine Stachurski/ Justine Hart - 3rd
Martin Carryer/Charles Ker - 4th

And here are some new entrants to the club 70% club

Robbie Green/Martin Carryer - 75. 58
Anne Gordon/Jack James - 70. 59
Carolyn Brodie/Heather Simpson - 71. 61
Anne Gordon/Jack James - 74. 04
Anne Gordon/Bob Hurley - 70. 83
Arthur Bennett/Steve Baron - 71. 55
Jack James/Bob Hurley - 76. 60
Dan Lynch/Rohan Wewala / 73. 13

**Gayle Leader**

### Bridge Lessons

March and April. Autumn. Traditionally time for Beginner lessons, and this year is no exception with 28 would-be-bridgers attending the first couple of classes on Monday evenings in March.

Alistair James runs an enjoyable class; I heard many players from the room next door commenting on the amount of laughter coming out of the 'other room'. Bridge lessons/fun?? Do those words even go together?

Our regular attendees have found out that they do…. Now, at the end of the course, we have a group of around 18 players, who will spend Monday nights in June honing their skills (and having fun) before joining the Main Room.

Can you help them, by being a buddy in July? On Monday nights, for 4 weeks. If you're keen to help out please let me or Alistair know.

Many thanks Alistair for your expertise, and to our helpers on lesson nights, it makes a huge difference having others there to answer the many questions.

A special acknowledgement to the large group of members who helped with recruitment by getting our game 'out there' in the cafes and library 2-3 times a week, in the month leading up to the start of the lessons. That was fun too.

This years Improvers Lessons are being held on the second Thursday evening of each month, again in the capable hands of Alistair James. They've proven very popular so far, with 5-6 tables of mostly newer players keen to learn more and improve their game. Each month covers a different topic, these are listed in the Programme Book, so come along if there's a particular topic you want to learn more about. No need to bring a partner. (Please note that in the Programme Listing it states Tuesday evening, it is in fact Thursday. )

An invitation was extended to members of Hokowhitu, and there's been a small number attending from that club. Cost is just a stamp on your table card, or $7 cash.

**Maxine Keay**

## Doubtful Doubles

There is an old saying in bridge "If your penalty doubles always work you are not doubling enough". Well, there are probably too many old sayings in bridge[1] but this one contains a germ of truth. OK, we always punish opponents who take us out of our good contract with a high-level sacrifice, but sometimes it is also a good idea to make a risky penalty double in other circumstances when you suspect the opponents have gone up one level too high. If nothing else, having the reputation of being quick on the trigger may deter opponents from getting into a gunfight.

Having said all that, I'm going to talk about four different situations where it may be *in*advisable to try a penalty double. The most obvious one is that you may be sending out a signal about an unusual distribution of trumps which could allow declarer to make an otherwise unmakeable contract. So, let's call that rule 1. But there are many other circumstances when a double could be tempting but may be inappropriate.

During one Monday afternoon session in May we encountered three hands where it could be argued a double was a bad idea and may have led or actually did lead to disaster, and each for a different reason.

Here is the first example. I was sitting East, non-vul against vulnerable opponents and this was my hand:

♠ Q J 9 7 6 5 4 2
♥ A
♦ 10 5
♣ 6 4

And here is the bidding:

| *West* | *North* | *East* | *South* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pass | 4♠ | 5♣ |
| Dbl | All Pass | | |

South struggled and went three down giving us a top board. So, what is the problem? Well, I didn't mention that there was a long hesitation by North as dealer before passing. Look at all four hands to see why.

***Board 21***
North Deals
N-S Vul

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ K 10 3<br>♥ Q 9 8 5 4 2<br>♦ K 7 2<br>♣ J | |
| ♠ 8<br>♥ 7 6<br>♦ J 8 6 4 3<br>♣ K Q 10 8 5 | N<br>W E<br>S | ♠ Q J 9 7 6 5 4 2<br>♥ A<br>♦ 10 5<br>♣ 6 4 |
| | ♠ A<br>♥ K J 10 3<br>♦ A Q 9<br>♣ A 9 7 3 2 | |

Many Norths will have opened with a weak bid in hearts, and even after a preempt by East there could be a spirited auction up to five hearts. This contract (which made with an overtrick) was bid at most tables. We were lucky that NS didn't find that fit but after the double by West, North must have been sorely tempted to switch to hearts, even at the five level. So, our second rule is: don't double if you suspect opponents may switch to a better contract.

We weren't so lucky on the next hand.

***Board 17***
North Deals
None Vul

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ A 5 4<br>♥ K<br>♦ K J 9 8 6 5<br>♣ A K 10 | |
| ♠ K<br>♥ A 9 7 5 4 2<br>♦ 10 3 2<br>♣ 5 4 3 | N<br>W E<br>S | ♠ Q 9 8 6 2<br>♥ J 8 6 3<br>♦ A Q 4<br>♣ 7 |
| | ♠ J 10 7 3<br>♥ Q 10<br>♦ 7<br>♣ Q J 9 8 6 2 | |

| *West* | *North* | *East* | *South* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1♦ | 1♠ | 2♣ |
| 2♥ | 3♣ | 4♥ | 5♣ |
| Dbl | All Pass | | |

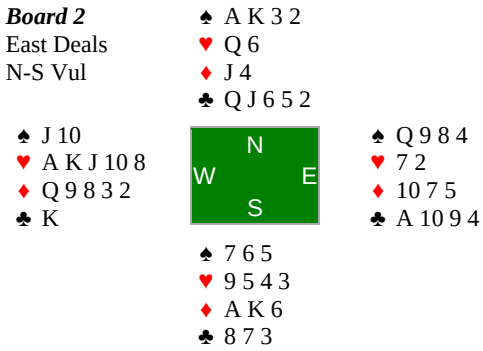
I think my partner's double of the five club bid was justified for two reasons. First, she thought we were being done out of a reasonable four heart contract, which was correct. Secondly, she knew that NS were aggressive bidders and may have overstepped the mark this time, which was also correct. But she didn't take into account the possibility that having doubled a contract we might be too eager to take the contract down too quickly.

West led ♥A dropping the singleton king which is fine. I am feeling anxious to take a couple of tricks as soon as possible to make sure the contract goes down so play ♥3. Partner notices this signal, suggesting a switch to the lower suit so next leads ♦2. Declarer inserts ♦9 and I win with ♦Q. I am in a state of high anxiety so next try ♦A which declarer ruffs. After this play by me declarer can take out trumps and reel off the remaining winning diamonds, comfortably taking the rest of the tricks and making the contract. Without the diamond signal from me, partner is more likely to switch to the singleton king in my spade suit, which takes the contract two down. So this gives us the next rule:

> Rule 3: don't double a contract if you and your partner might get so anxious to take it down that you try to play setting tricks too soon.

[1] If they sell tickets for the public execution of the bridge comment "Lucky last" I'll be first in the queue

The next situation is completely different again. Here is the deal:




| *West* | *North* | *East* | *South* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pass | Pass |
| 1 ♥ | Dbl | 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ |
| Dbl | 3 ♣ | ? | |

As East, should I double at this point? It looks as if NS have their Ks in a T which is one consideration. But will partner realize my double is for penalties? Maybe she would think it is just a competitive double inviting her to continue the auction leading to an unmakeable 3NT for us. I assess that with my shortage in partner's suit we might take NS two off anyway which will likely give us a good result, so I pass. Consequently, NS play in 3 clubs undoubled but as hoped it goes down two for 200 to us and a top board. So that gives us rule 4, which could be more crucial than the other three.

> Rule 4: Don't make a penalty double if there is a possibility partner may think it is for takeout.

As a postscript on the last rule: there is a book which highlights this difficulty written by an English international player called Sally Brock. It is called "Double Trouble". There is a picture on the cover where a cartoon character is saying "When I say 'DOUBLE' I mean 'double' not 'DOUBLE'". The author tries to give clear guidelines to readers so they should never get in a fix. However, subsequent to writing the book Sally played in a tournament where she was unable to follow her own guidelines. She thought her partner was making a penalty double and it was takeout leading to catastrophic results.

In conclusion, doubling can give you top boards but may also give you bottom ones for a variety of reasons. So always think twice before making that fateful bid. If nothing else, undoubled contracts are less likely to raise the blood pressure.

**Ray Kemp**

## Director's Corner

In the last newsletter, I shared with you-all the start of my Directing journey, focussing on the most common calls to the table. I started with the "Insufficient Bid" and tried to unpack the options for both the offending and non-offending side, particularly in explaining the notion of the "comparable bid". In reviewing the piece for the newsletter, Lorraine reminded me that a final check for the Director is to review the hand at the end of play to ensure that no disadvantage has been received by the non-offending side and the Director can adjust the final score to reflect any disadvantage. That's scary and contentious territory for any Director and particularly those still wearing L-plates. Be kind, please!

Anyway, as promised this time, I'm going to look at the thorny and confusing issue of lead restrictions.

### It's the LAW: Lead Restrictions (Laws 26, 50 and 59)

Lead restrictions generally arise under two circumstances:

1) When a withdrawn call (including an insufficient bid) is not replaced by a comparable bid (Law 26)

2) When a major penalty card remains exposed on the table (Law 50).

In the first instance, it is relatively straight-forward. If the offending player becomes a defender, the declarer may, at the offender's partner's first turn to lead (including if it is the opening lead), prohibit the lead of any one suit that has not been mentioned in the legal auction by the offender. For example, if the auction has gone:

| North | East | South | West |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1S | Pass | Pass | ~~1D~~ 2C |
| Pass | Pass | 2S | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |

then North, as declarer playing in 2S, may prohibit East from leading any suit except clubs. If South had bid 2H which was then passed out and so South becomes the declarer, playing in 2H, then West may lead any suit but as soon as East wins a trick, then South may again prohibit the lead of any suit except clubs. In both cases, this prohibition remains for as long as East continues to win the trick but ceases once East has lost the lead.

The second circumstance where lead restrictions may apply is when there is at least one major penalty card exposed on the table. In the next newsletter, I'll look into how and why cards become penalty cards but for now, just assume that there is a major penalty card exposed on the table and know that a major penalty card must always be played at the first legal opportunity. When a defender gets the lead when his partner has a major penalty card exposed, they may not lead until declarer has chosen one of the following options:

1) To require a lead in the same suit as the major penalty card, in which case the penalty card is returned to the offending player's hand

2) To prohibit a lead in the same suit as the major penalty card, in which case the penalty card is returned to the offending player's hand, but the prohibition remains for as long as the non-offending defender is on lead

3) To neither require nor prohibit the lead in the same suit, in which case the penalty card remains exposed on the table and declarer can continue to select one of these options for as long as the major penalty card remains exposed on the table

Law 59 provides for cases where the non-offending defender cannot follow a lead restriction i. e. cannot lead the required suit or can only lead a prohibited suit. In this case defender should just lead any legal card without any table talk!

As previously stated, the Director is able to review the play and judge whether any of the illegalities have disadvantaged the non-offending side and, if so, to make an appropriate adjustment to the score.

Well, I hope that's cleared that all up! If you have found this fascinating, then you might like to consider learning to be a Director. Just let Lorraine know and she will arrange a training programme for you.

**Denise Servante**
**L-Director**

**Eights are Great**

From early lessons in bridge we learn that aces and picture cards are the most important features of a hand. That is why they are the key cards in guiding our bidding. However, sometimes lower cards can be crucial during the playing of contracts. In both of the following deals from one Monday afternoon session the humble eight is the real game changer.

***Board 10***
East Deals
Both Vul

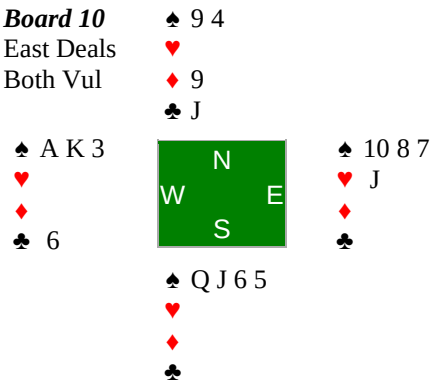
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 9 4 2<br>♥ 5<br>♦ Q 9 6 3 2<br>♣ J 8 3 2 | |
| ♠ A K 3<br>♥ A 8 6<br>♦ A 8 5<br>♣ A 10 6 4 | N<br>W E<br>S | ♠ 10 8 7<br>♥ K J 9 7 2<br>♦ K J 4<br>♣ K 9 |
| | ♠ Q J 6 5<br>♥ Q 10 4 3<br>♦ 10 7<br>♣ Q 7 5 | |

After I opened one heart as East with my sketchy eleven points it was difficult to persuade partner to stay out of a slam. At five tables EW got to six hearts or six no trumps. Fortunately, my partner was more cautious and with a flat hand and after discovering we were missing ♥Q she stopped on the brink. I was left to play in a contract of five hearts.

After the lead of ♦T by South I looked at dummy and wondered whether partner had been too cautious. If the trumps behaved I could easily take twelve tricks. However, on the second round of trumps North showed out and I now had to consider whether I could even make my five level contract.

I took my ♥K leaving South to cash her two heart tricks at her leisure. I'd like to say I had a clever notion about how to make this contract but it was just as lame as most of Baldrick's cunning plans. So, I just continued trying to exude confidence in the way I observe the better players at our club appear to do. Like Dickens' Mr Micawber, I hoped that "something would turn up."

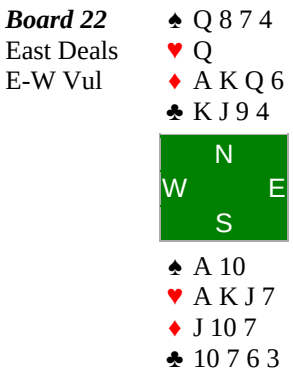
I played two clubs and ruffed a third and then started on the diamonds. South ruffed the third diamond, cashed her last trump and this is where we stood with four tricks to play. I had just lost two tricks and somehow had to win the rest. South is on lead.




South seems to have no choice but to lead ♠Q which she did. I would have done the same, but with 20/20 hindsight a more deceptive choice would have been ♠J. I, of course, took the ace in dummy and ruffed my last club to get back to hand. The lead of ♠T from hand gave South no choice but to cover with her jack and I won the trick with the king in dummy. Crucially, North's nine dropped. Now I could lead the last spade from dummy up to my winning eight in hand.

We didn't get chance for a post-mortem but I wonder if North-South discussed the deal afterwards. It looks as if the key play was the discard of a low spade by North earlier on in the hand. How was she supposed to realize that holding on to three uninspiring spades was going to be crucial? I should imagine North had focused on watching her holding in the minor suits and assumed the rest of her cards were irrelevant.

Here is a second deal where the 8 card is going to be critical.



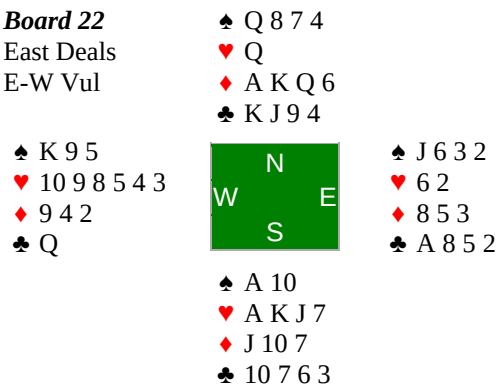

| *West* | *North* | *East* | *South* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pass | 1 NT |
| Pass | 2 ♣ | Pass | 2 ♥ |
| Pass | 3 NT | All Pass | |

West leads ♥T and 3NT looks a comfortable enough contract but everyone else is likely to be in the same one, so it is important to make as many overtricks as possible. What is your plan?

After taking ♥Q in dummy, South leads ♦6 to ♦J in hand. He sees clubs as a useful suit for generating overtricks but realizes that entries into hand are severely limited. As a precaution he leads ♣T from hand intending to run the card if West does not cover. West plays ♣Q, dummy contributes ♣K and East wins with ♣A.

East returns another heart taken in hand. The defence seems to have been uncommonly kind so far. However, a low club to dummy gives South the bad news that West's ♣Q was a singleton. He can cash the jack and nine of the suit but loses to East's ♣8. South claims eleven tricks but the system tells him he could have made twelve, which other players have done.

Here are the four hands.




Obviously, South's mistake was to try running ♣T rather than playing a low club from hand. How did you do? One has to feel sorry for South. He was actually playing the percentages. If West has both missing club honours (a 25% chance) then running the ten delivers a better result than leading a low club. It only produces an inferior outcome if either player has the singleton queen which by my estimation is about ten percent of the time. Whatever South's hard luck story the eight wins out again.

OK, I may not have convinced you from these two hands to add an extra high card point for each 8-card that you hold but at least you should be aware that any non-honour card can be crucial. Think carefully before deciding which one to discard. For example, eights beat half the other cards in each suit. Think about it.

**Ray Kemp**

# ♣♦♥♠ 2025 Bridge Congress, Palmerston North ♣♦♥♠

## 8th to 15th November 2025

Congress 2025 is being held in Palmerston North. And again in 2026 and 2027. Play our cards right and we may get it for even longer.

## Don't commit yourself now but think about it

Things we/you have to do.

1. Congress is for **ALL GRADES.** That is **ALL GRADES** and not just the 'top guns'.

2. Get a partner and play in Congress 2025. It will never be cheaper.

3. Congress 2025 will need 'stand by' players of **all grades**. Either singles, pairs and possibly a team. Don't commit yourself now but please think about it. If you can only help one or two days here and there that will greatly assist.

4. Caddies. Congress 2025 will need Caddies. We will need caddies for all playing days. Experience is teaching us that 'mature' people could make the best caddies. Not playing Congress? Then think about caddying. We will need 8-10 caddies per day.
   If you can only do one or two days here and there, great. Please put your name down

5. A daily clean up team. Please don't leave it to the **"regulars"** who always help out whilst others sit back and look. Shock yourself and be proactive.

Other than the standard/regular playing events there are two additional **features** for Congress 2025.

There will be an evening quiz night on Tuesday 11th November 2025. Get a team together. I don't have any further details at this stage but watch this ( ) space.

There will be a one off "Novice" event during Congress. Just a single session. Let's help novice players get their toes wet at playing in congress. More details to follow.

Think about Congress 2025. Can you help? How can you help? Get a partner and play in Congress 2025. Shock yourself. Caddie or Stand by player??

The long term plan is to keep NZ Bridge Congress in Palmerston North for as many years as possible. Think about how many years Rotorua and Hamilton kept Congress.

Can you help, want to volunteer, have some ideas & suggestions???

Ken Bateman, thislookout@outlook. com

# Congress Caddies

We will want Caddies for Congress 2025

8th November to 15th November

There will be two playing areas and we will need Caddies for both areas.

Approximately 8-10 caddies per day.

It would be nice to have the same caddies each day but that is not a necessity. If you can help out for only one or two days, great.

Duties

To make Congress run like a well oiled machine.

Picking up and dropping off boards at the table for the players

Supplying new bidding pads

Finding player's lost biro's

Although bridge players are (always, sometimes, never) tidy and considerate, they occasionally don't tidy up after themselves!!!

Help set up the tables, after a session of play, ready for the next session.

Need to sit in as dummy.

The carrot!

Become a caddie for two or three sessions and NZ Bridge Congress will pay a session entry fee.

Experience has taught us that the best Caddies are mature bridge players. If you are not playing, think about caddying.

Definitely, possibly, I suppose I could, please add your name to the list on the club notice board.

# Congress "Stand By" Players

We will want "Stand By" for Congress 2025

8th November to 15th November

Every now and then partner is sick, running very late, called away for an emergency or simply eloping.

## Duties

Be available at reception at the start of each playing session.

Make up the fourth player at the table.

All grades of "Stand By" players are required. We will match you up.

If you are not needed as a "Stand By" player, possibly help out as a caddie.

Definitely, possibly, I suppose I could, please add your name to the list on the club notice board.