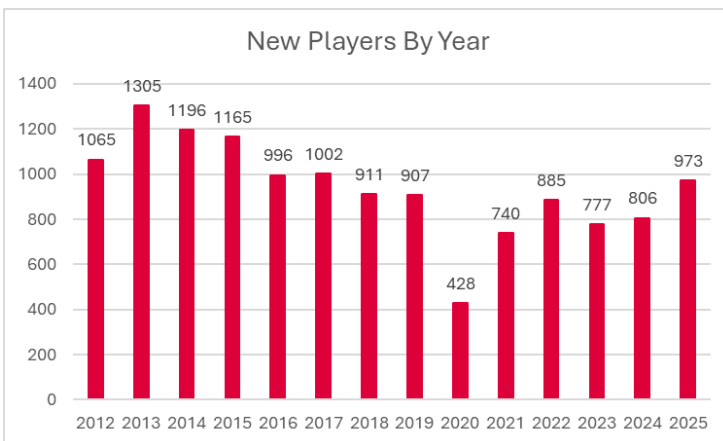




### From the Editor

Clubs can only remove members from the ABF Masterpoints Centre in March each year, making March data the most reliable for measuring active members.

It is pleasing to note that the still-young Bridge NSW is having some success in its core objective of growing the number of players. The first step has been very firmly achieved, with the decline in the number of players across the state arrested and a small upturn just starting. The result wasn't helped by Bungendore, which had 50 members, changing its affiliation to the ACT.



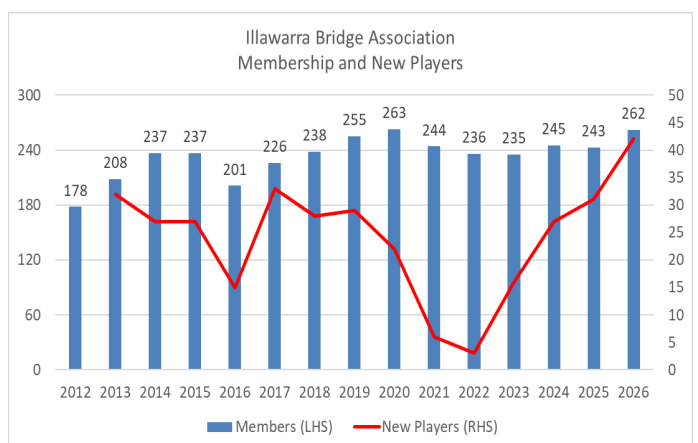
The investment in recruiting new players is starting to yield solid returns. These figures, from January to December each year (only 11 months in 2012), show that post-COVID new players were trending around 800. In contrast, in the four years before, the mid-900s were the norm.

2025 saw a return to the pre-COVID level. The ambition has to be to get back to the 2013 level.

Here in the Illawarra, we fell one member short of our record membership, which was just as COVID hit. Most impressive, however, has been our recruitment effort.

The great work of our teachers – primarily Jill and Marie – has been supported by recruitment activity, including the Seniors Week taster sessions and the promotion on 97.3 (ABC Illawarra).

As with all volunteer positions, we shouldn't be relying on our regulars. You don't have to be a great bridge player to run classes, just passionate about the game and patient. Talk to Marie if you think you might have what it takes.



## Management Committee

The Management Committee (MC) met on 11 April. It was a longer-than-usual meeting to allow time to consider proposed updates to the club's tournament regulations, including the ethics and disciplinary regulations. These were approved and have been returned to the Tournament Committee for implementation.

The Committee regrettably accepted Chris Yates's resignation. In her note, Chris expressed an intent to step back from bridge for a bit. The Committee is extremely grateful for Chris's work, especially in publicity. Our new player numbers certainly benefited from her work.

Following the Builders Club's decision that our congresses are too disruptive to their business model, Marie and Grant have been looking for an alternative venue for the Chris Diment congress in June. The event will now be held at the Kembla Grange racecourse in the Bert Lillye Lounge (pictured in use as a function room). It is a large, well-lit space. As a side benefit, we can increase the event limits to 40 tables. Time to remind family and friends.



At each meeting, the Committee reviews the suggestions put in the box. One suggestion requested that the Committee remind members of some basic hygiene principles. As we all know, many respiratory viruses and other diseases are spread by contact with surfaces. Cards in bridge circulate among players at up to eight tables during the movements we use, so particular care is required. Don't touch them with your mouth, and be careful when sneezing or coughing; use your other hand (or an elbow) to cover your mouth and nose. Hand sanitiser is still available at the club.

The Tournament Committee has asked the Management Committee whether, given the high table numbers on Saturday and the increased membership, IBA should schedule an additional weekly session. Dave Havyatt has been tasked with conducting a survey of members. The survey is available [here](#). The MC and Tournament Committee have agreed to apply to Bridge NSW to have our February Swiss Pairs be a two-day (Swiss Pairs and Teams) Congress.

The Committee has requested that we include a Vale section in the newsletter. This will primarily be a repeat of detail included in email advice to members.

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## Results

### Major Events and Congresses

The **Central West Festival** has again been popular, with 17 IBA members making the trip to Orange.

In the Open/Intermediate field, one team composed entirely of IBA players was Helen and Paul Lavings, Stuart Cutsforth, and Renate La Marra. Vicky Lisle played with her regular Monday night partner, Niek and the Crossmans (all from Canberra). Glenda and Roger McNee, Steve Geddes and Elaine Pretorius each made up half a team.

In the Restricted/Novice two IBA teams contested, Melissa Ardern, Cornelia Szenczy, Aileen O'Brien and Ngairé Meehan in the Restricted; Don Clark, Paula Corbett, Tom Malcher and Lorna O'Leary in the Novice.

The Lavings team came seventh, a big improvement on last year's 16<sup>th</sup>. The McNees won in the Intermediate division. Vicky, Steve and Elaine's teams finished in the top half of the combined field.



*Craig Mietzke, Glenda McNee, Christine Hanley and Roger McNee.*

In the Novice/Restricted, the Clark team came 15<sup>th</sup> out of 28, while the other IBA team didn't do quite as well.

The same players participated in the Pairs events, but none reached the podium. In the Open, Stuart and Renate finished 15<sup>th</sup>, two places ahead of their erstwhile teammates Paul and Helen. Steve and Elaine, and Vicky and her partner, didn't do quite as well. The McNees came in 16<sup>th</sup> in the Intermediate. Paula Corbett and Lorna O'Leary were our best-placed pair in the combined Restricted/Novice, finishing 33<sup>rd</sup>.

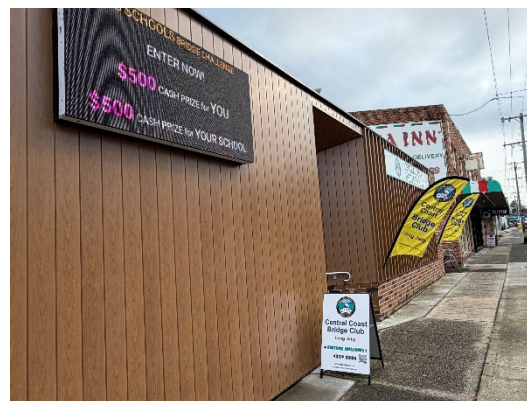
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Congratulations to the team of Conny Szenczy, Erica Gray, Maggie and Dave Havyatt who won the Restricted section in teams at the **Central Coast Bridge Club Golden Anniversary Congress**.

The Central Coast Bridge Club has spent an unbelievable \$1 million on the redevelopment of its club. The room itself is brilliant, as is their catering.



They also have a great location and make good use of signage. The electronic board at the front is advertising a Schools Bridge Challenge. They are offering a \$500 prize for the pair and \$500 to their school, along with free bridge lessons. The event is being held in June, and it will be very interesting to see how it goes.



## Club Events

**Tuesday Teams** was played on 24 February and 3 March. Congratulations to the placegetters :

- 1<sup>st</sup> Martin Bunder, Bill Fotheringham, Liz and Stephen Hurley
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Carol Jeffs, Kay Snowden, Marie Pickering and Carolyn Githens
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Julie Carbonara, John Rankin, Cathy Ashcroft and Andrew Smith

The club **Mixed Pairs Championship** was contested on 7 and 14 March. All pairs who contested are eligible to enter the State Final as representatives of the club (at a discounted entry fee). If you played and want to go to the final, speak to Jeff Carberry. Otherwise, you can directly enter the State Final <https://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/3990>.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Paul and Helen Lavings
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Carol and Malcolm Kerr
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ian and Vicky Lisle

The **Thursday Pairs Championship** on 26 March and 2 April also included the first event of the Easter Egglectic. Not only did Stuart and Renate win the Thursday Pairs, but their 59.90% win in the second week, combined with their stunning 75.12% on Saturday, gave them a solid win of all the eggs.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Stuart Cutsforth and Renate La Marra
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Martin Bunder and Ian Porter
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Elena Pereloma and Paul Woods

## Upcoming Events

IBA Club Teams Championship 2 and 9 May. Enter via my ABF <https://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/4214>

Wednesday Teams 6 and 13 May. Enter via MyABF <https://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/4215>

## News From the North

By Barbara Overington

Bridge at Thirroul is going well! Friday IBAND has been incredible over the last few weeks. We're raising the rafters! So wonderful to welcome Figtree beginners and regular out-of-town visitors – long may it continue.

We had a great day celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday. It was wonderful that Rob, Jeff and Kaye came to celebrate with us.

Due to absences from our Christmas bridge day, the recipient of the George Cole Trophy and the director 'Thank Yous' to Rob Mathie and Jack Regan for their invaluable director help at IBAND were belatedly given to the very worthy recipients at the end of February.

Congratulations to Barbara Giorgio: George Cole Trophy (pictured right).



Following a request at the Management Committee meeting, I've provided an explanation of the George Cole Trophy. When George died in 2010, it was decided to honour his wonderful contribution to bridge in the Northern Suburbs with an encouragement award. The trophy is perpetual.

The award has been given out at the IBAND Christmas party every year since. The first recipient was Vince Whiteman, a very enthusiastic bridge player, retired priest, with hidden talents, a wonderful guitarist, who entertained us with sing-alongs at the end of our Christmas parties.

**Happy Bridging!**

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## Promotions

Congratulations to the following members on their recent promotions

### Feb 2025

Grade	Name
Bronze State	Susan Hammond
State	Paula Corbett
Graduate	Brian Moore

### Mar 2026

Grade	Name
Bronze National	Erica Gray
Bronze Local	Hans Rijdsdijk
	Fien Rijdsdijk
Local	Melissa McNamara
Graduate	Bob Raine

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## Rilla's Member Corner

*This month, IBAND Twenty Years Ago by Sue Kennedy*

Early in 2006, George and Bronwyn Cole started bridge lessons in Austinmer. It was attended by Robyn and Paul McKenzie Woods, Norma Jones, Lindsey Smith, Anne McNamara and me. No audio visuals, no textbooks, just plain verbal directions. Some Mondays, we would go to their house, Jenny O'Donnell's, or Lindsey's house.

Then, one day, Bronwyn said a bridge club would be starting up at the Railway Institute in Thirroul. Behind the scenes, George had been negotiating with the Illawarra Bridge Club and a couple of locals to set this up. Legalities, equipment and procedures were included in the discussions. Bronwyn and George went to play at Figtree, and the next Monday told us how the "processes" were to be followed, e.g., laying out our tricks, won and lost. We really had no idea; the language was very foreign to us!

Well, the big night arrived, and the doors of the Institute were opened. When I arrived, there were a lot of people; I knew only a handful. The stage was set. I played with Lyndsey, a very confident player. The excitement, the buzz in the air, the adrenaline flowing; this was fantastic! What had I got myself into? We had no idea of scoring as we had been playing rubber bridge. It was a very busy night for the director, but many of the regulars were kind to us and helped us with our mistakes. At one time, I looked up to Bronwyn, who had spent the night pacing the floor and looking out the window. She was probably thinking, "Oh hell, what have we done?" At the end of

the night, I overheard an official say, "I don't think we should score this?"

My friends and I continued to attend on Wednesday night at Thirroul, then on Monday night. As time passed, people were less likely to go out at night, so these sessions were discontinued. Various other times were tried. Now, Wednesday and Friday afternoons (which have a very loyal following) continue at Thirroul.

From the original cohort, Barb, Kay and Paul Tuckerman, Anne McNamara and Paulette Hill are still playing at Thirroul on Fridays. Many thanks to Barb and her team for continuing George and Bronwyn's dream.

*This is Sue's account of her IBAND experience. A history by Bronwyn was included in Friendship & Play: 30 years of the Illawarra Bridge Association Inc.*

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*Interview with Jack Regan*

**Newsletter:** Jack, I hear you've had recent success at golf. What determined the field for the event you played in?

**Jack:** It was an invitation-only event, as adjudged by Porsche Australia, requiring invitees to be registered owners and accredited golfers, run under strict conditions, including thorough vetting of handicaps, minimum numbers of recent rounds played, and, in some cases, pre-qualification events. The event was held at Royal Melbourne Golf Club, renowned as Australia's most exclusive golf club.

**Newsletter:** What was the format of the event?

**Jack:** The Porsche Golf Cup Australia Challenge final was staged at Royal Melbourne West, one of their two courses, which when consolidated with the East course as a composite layout is regarded as Australia's greatest test of golf having hosted all major Australian tournaments, including the most recent Australian Open which featured Rory McIlroy and the Presidents Cup (a Biannual USA vs the Rest of the World team championship) on three prior occasions. The event was played over 18 holes, featuring 3 men's divisions and a women's division, with the winners determined by the best-handicap stableford score. It was contested by 120 players from around Australia, with the other winners from Townsville, Perth & Melbourne.

**Newsletter:** How did you go?

**Jack:** Playing off a handicap of five on the day, I had a par round 72 and 41 points,

which was both the best scratch or gross score as well as the best stableford or handicap score for Division 1, which is the category for the lowest handicap (i.e. highest-rated) players.

**Newsletter:** What happens next?

**Jack:** In addition to the trophy and a Porsche golf bag, the 4 winners form the team that will represent Porsche Australia at the World Cup final to be held at the Ritz Carlton resort Penha Longa, Sintra, Portugal from April 27 to April 30. It is an all-expenses-paid trip, including return business-class fares and the option to have a partner attend. Around 30 countries are expected to compete for the title.

**Footnote:** Jack was originally scheduled to fly via Dubai, but is now flying the other way via Canada. Morgen has chosen not to go.

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## Vale – David Lyon

It is with a heavy heart that we say vale and farewell to David Lyon.

David died after his battle with cancer. He began playing Bridge at Figtree in 1998. He played for years with his wife Fran, well before he retired, and was also seen frequenting the sessions at IBAND with his partner John Spira. He was a keen supporter of our online sessions during COVID and continued to play online at our Monday RealBridge sessions that followed.

He worked as a GP, and was well known in Thirroul and the wider Wollongong area. David's funeral was held on Monday 30th March.

We extend our condolences to his wife Fran and the members of his wider family. We will remember his smiling, gentle face and his lovely Scottish brogue.

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## Player Development

Standard American as taught at the club is 5 card majors, 1 Club is 2+, 3M raise is a limit bid 10-12 HCP, weak twos, pre-empts, 2C = 20+ or 4 losers, 2D response is negative (0-7), Standard Staymen, transfers to Majors, Standard Blackwood. We asked some senior players at IBA and elsewhere what conventions/gadgets they would recommend players should add next. (Noting that they must work on declarer and defensive card play as well).

**Jeff Carberry:** There are so many options that I would recommend none of them. I think a partnership will develop options to meet their needs over time. But I would suggest doing nothing until they are regularly scoring over 50% in good fields.

One exception is that they must understand the concept and usage of reversing as soon as possible. Other than that, concentrate on play and carding

**Peter Gill:** If they want to win, as few as possible. Perhaps Roman Keycard 1430, cue raises and two-way check back, which are all pretty much universally used by the top players.

In the recent playoffs for the Australian Open, Seniors and Mixed teams, two-thirds of the pairs played weak twos, and only a third of the fields used fancy two bids like Multi 2D. Only one of the 9 successful pairs who finished in the vital top three positions in the three events played a Multi 2D. Why teach people stuff that the top players mostly don't like?

**Grant Cowen:** I would recommend a 2-suited overcall over an opponent's opening

NT bid. This would avoid overcalling on a six-card suit and finding partner with a singleton or void when a potential 4/4 or 5/3 fit is missed.

Not only are you bidding more, but you are also disrupting the opponents' bidding sequence, and, as a bonus, you may be highlighting the correct suit to lead at trick one.

**Andy Hung:** I'd say the next things they should consider learning about/adding would be competitive bidding tools, such as:

- The Negative Double by Responder
- Responding correctly to partner's takeout double (according to strength)
- Learning about the degree of our trump fit helps us in competitive auctions (e.g., after we bid and raised from 1M to 2M, if opponents bid over that, we don't need extra points to bid 3M; we just need the 9-card fit).
- If they want to dip their feet into slam bidding, then the good old 4NT Blackwood (just straight ace-ask, not Roman Key Card)

As you mentioned, working on declarer and defensive play is more important than learning "new gadgets/conventions".

*Andy Hung runs popular bridge holidays, which can be found on his website <https://andyhungbridge.com/>. His Noosa holidays in May are booked out. A couple of IBA players going to these have been asked to write a review for the Newsletter.*

## A hand at the club

By Grant Cowen

This hand was played on Thursday night, 19 March.

Bd: 5                    ♠ J 8 2  
 Dir.: N                 ♥ A 8 6 3  
 Vul: NS                ♦ K 9 3  
                              ♣ 10 8 5

♠ K 10 7 6 3	♠ A Q 9 5 4
♥ 5	♥ J 7 2
♦ J 7	♦ 8 5
♣ K J 6 4 3	♣ Q 9 7

♠ void  
 ♥ K Q 9 7 4  
 ♦ A Q 10 6 4 2  
 ♣ A 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		
N		6	7		2		8
S		6	7		2	8	9
E	2			3			15
W	2			3			

After two passes, South's first action should be to ask what POTENTIAL this hand holds. If partner shows the black suits, then slam aspirations subside and game aspirations flicker only. However, if partner shows a primary red-suit fit or a double fit in the red suits with as few as two fitting cards of the ♥A and the ♦K, you can envision taking 13 tricks with five Hearts, six Diamonds ♣A and a Club ruff in dummy. If partner holds ♠AK, then game in hearts is the limit of the hand.

So, South should bid 1♦, the longer of the suits preparing to REVERSE. A reverse is a bid of a higher rank on your next call than your opening bid & shows a hand of 16/17+ HCP, and forces your partner to find another bid. If partner were to bid 1♠, 1NT, 2♣, or 2♦, then

2♥ by opener would qualify with the above hand.

On their hand, North would actually bid 1♥ and South could show Spade shortage & a slam would be reached.

In our case, Lucy & I were EW. Because of the favourable Vulnerability (i.e. opponents were Vul, we were not), I was able to show a 2-Suited overcall, showing the extreme suits Spades and Clubs, with a cue bid of 2♦. North can now not bid their 1♥ and passed.

Lucy raised immediately to 4♠ (envisioning a known ten-card fit in Spades and recognising the ♣Q in our known 2nd suit as an asset should we declare the hand). This was a probable cheap save over their probable red suit game. Our combined hands were offensive in nature & were likely to produce nine or even ten tricks on a good day, but maybe only one or two tricks in defence, or on a bad day, nil tricks on defence.

South was in a quandary and desperately wanted to bid. However, the East bid of 4♠ could have been weak, made purely as a disruptive bid, or held up to 17 HCP (those held by North as well as their own) and was bidding to make. The interference of EW denied NS the ability to become aware of THEIR Double Fit (a combined 8-card fit in 2 suits, which is an asset when declaring & produces additional tricks without the need to ruff suits to develop length cards for discards).

Reluctantly, South passed after much consideration, and now North, unable to take any inference from South's deliberations, ethically passed.

## Feature Article

By Brad Coles

*This article first appeared as the editorial in the February 2026 Bulletin of the International Bridge Publishers Association. Reproduced with permission of the author and publisher.*

While doing some research for an article on the events of 2015, I came across an interesting hand from the era. A declarer in 7NT needed to make five tricks with ♠KQ109 in hand opposite ♣A86532, with a defender holding ♣Jxx. With the suit blocked, he needed a side entry to dummy, which was in the form of ♦9654 (declarer holding ♦AKQ1073). Declarer claimed at trick one with no statement, the director was called, and the laydown contract was ruled one down.

While this specific deal is ten years old, claims like this come up all the time. This one was discussed on Bridge Winners, with many readers feeling that the defenders should not have called the director in such a straightforward contract. While some thought the director's call was correct ("that's why we have rules"), others thought it was unethical ("I would never want to win that way").

You might take the view that since no other declarer in the 135-table world-class event got this hand wrong, declarer would certainly have spotted the blockage if he had played it out. The math does not support that. Firstly, only thirteen tables faced this specific play problem, as the rest played in a suit contract.

Secondly, if we assume that the chance of an expert making an error like this is one in ten thousand, then when it does happen (and it will one day), it is not likely to happen twice on one board. It will usually appear as an anomaly, like this one. Here, it happened to

a player who came 94th in the event who, if he even saw the blockage, is known to have not had the sense to mention it in his claim (simply pointing silently to the nine of diamonds would have sufficed).

Certainly, declarer may have discovered the problem in time during the play, but only if he played on clubs before diamonds. If you don't see the blockage, there is no reason to play on clubs first. The Laws say that a bad claim does not commit you to an irrational play, but, if you haven't seen the club blockage, there is nothing irrational about playing one of your solid suits before the other.

It's fine if your personal philosophy means that you will never make an opponent pay for an error like this – as long as you don't expect the same treatment from others. You may see allowing an opponent to get away with a careless error as the only ethical choice, but it is far from ethical to attempt to get away with such an error yourself. If you have any integrity, you should call the director yourself if an opponent attempts to let you get away with an infraction.

Most importantly, it is ridiculous to criticise someone for following the rules and letting the director make this decision. The subsequent debate has confirmed that there are two sides to this story, and deciding who is right is the director's job.

It is also poor sportsmanship to complain when such a ruling goes against you. However, obviously, it can be difficult to

suffer a setback like this with grace – even more so when a part of you secretly knows it was entirely your own fault.

The error on this deal is believable, even for an expert. Every player has lapses of concentration, with the occasional tired counting error, revoke, or inexplicable zero-per-cent play. This is especially true if you are having a "bad day" or running at the

bottom of the field. The best players in the world will do it far less often, but when they do make a rare error, they should play by the same rules as mortals.

Whether this declarer missed the blockage or saw the blockage and decided to keep it a secret, either way, he forfeited his right to be seen as infallible.

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## Calling the Director

*By Dave Hayvatt*

The column by Brad Coles, reproduced in this issue, touches on an important issue in bridge: when is it appropriate to call the Director? In the case described in the column, the player genuinely has a choice about whether to call the Director.

Sometimes at the bridge table in clubs, players manufacture a case for not calling the Director, instead making a 'ruling' (of sorts) themselves. The classic cases, of course, are insufficient bids, calls out of rotation and leads from the wrong hand. The simple corrections players make at the table are usually wrong (see note below). Whether this is right or wrong came to my attention twice lately.

The first occasion was at the ABDA's National Directors Interactive Workshop held in Melbourne in February. In a session on *Issues for the New Director*, the Chair of the NSW Directing Committee, John McIlrath, made the point that if players don't call the Director, then the Director doesn't get to practice their craft.

An objection was raised that John was suggesting we call the Director as practice as higher priority than players enjoying the game. The players just want to get on with it and are happy just to settle the issue at the table and only call the Director if they disagree. A recording of this short discussion is available here [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk\\_qctsJAqo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk_qctsJAqo).

A few weeks later Maggie & I had the pleasure of playing in a session where one of my brothers and his wife play, the (unaffiliated) group at the [Terrigal 50+ Leisure & Learning Centre](#). I was informed before we started that they don't call the Director much, preferring just to sort it out at the table.

There are some simple reasons why even the most social of groups playing Duplicate bridge should always call the Director.

1. Players making their own decisions often don't know the Laws. For example, the most common way that players deal with an insufficient bid is to allow the bid to be increased to the sufficient level in the same designation or to pass. The first error is that this

leaves out the right of the next player in rotation (offender's Left-Hand Opponent or LHO) to accept the insufficient bid and have bidding continue. The second error is that the offender's rights to make the bid sufficient refer to what the bid specifies, not what it says; if the sequence is 1NT, 2♦, 2♣, the insufficient bid of 2♣ (Staymen) is not specifying clubs so 3♣ isn't a simple raise of the suit specified.

The additional opportunity to make a 'comparable call' is also usually ignored (as they are quite rare; there is no comparable call for our example). If the offender passes or makes any other bid (they may not double) than one that replaces in the same specification or is comparable, then offender's partner has to pass for the remainder of the auction.

2. The balance between the players is not always even, and the more experienced or more knowledgeable players might wind up making decisions that favour themselves...quite probably unconsciously.
3. If the Director only gets called when the players are already in dispute the Director's role is harder. Parts of other Laws may already have been infringed. Furthermore, John's point is valid; how can we expect the Director to get good at rulings if they don't get practice?
4. The final consideration is the biggest. Unlike rubber bridge, your true opponents in duplicate are the other pairs sitting in the same direction as you on a board. When players make their own ruling at the table, the people affected are not just the pairs at the table but all the other pairs in the room. An incorrect decision by the players can change the final outcome for everybody.

Finally, we have to deal with the issue of perception around calling the Director. The Laws of Duplicate Bridge are designed to **rectify** the position after an infraction. Adjustments are only made where an action has actually damaged the other side (e.g. revokes, some cases of using unauthorised information). Calling the Director, therefore, is not about penalising the offender, but ensuring pairs at other tables are not disadvantaged by the infraction (and to a lesser extent, the non-offending pair).

A lot depends on **how** the Director is called. Immediately snapping your hand in the air and saying DIRECTOR!!!! as if a momentous event has occurred will send the wrong message. Prefacing anything by saying to the table 'I think something isn't right here, I'm just going to call the Director', and then raising your hand and calling in a loud but calm voice sends a totally different signal.

It is (almost) never right to not call the Director. By all means, if there is an insufficient bid and LHO says they will accept that insufficient bid and makes a call, and you know that is the first option under the Laws then there is no need to call the Director. But if you are at all unsure, call the Director. Even a playing Director would prefer to have their game interrupted than see an irregularity not dealt with properly

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## Central Coast Golden Anniversary Teams

By Dave Havyatt

Bidding and making slams can be very rewarding in teams events, they can also be very costly. In one match at the Central Coast Golden Anniversary Congress my partner and I experienced both.

The first slam we bid provides a reminder of why you should take your time planning the play. The contract was 6♠ and the ♣4 was led. When dummy goes down declarer sees:

♠AJ6  
♥AQ86  
♦KQ8  
♣A52

♠Q10972  
♥K2  
♦A642  
♣Q3

If the player on lead hasn't led away from the King, and the ♠K is offside for the finesse, we have two losers. Declarer needs to find a club discard in dummy before trying for the spade finesse, and the solution is hearts. With opponents having seven hearts, the odds are good that they split 3-4 or 4-3 (they will be split either way 62.17% of the time).

Having taken the opening with the ♣A, play ♥6 to ♥K, return the ♥2 winning with the Ace then playing Queen for the club discard.

It transpired that the lead was away from the ♣K and the ♠K was onside, but at our table the first trick was won by declarer with the ♣A and then they didn't transfer to dummy for the finesse but instead played the ♠A. Instead of a certain 13 tricks we went one off. At the other table East was left in 3NT making 13 tricks – so thankfully we only went -13 IMPS.

Bd: 10      ♠K54  
Dlr.: E      ♥J109  
Vul: All     ♦10953  
                 ♣987

♠Q10972      ♠AJ6  
♥K2            ♥AQ86  
♦A642         ♦KQ8  
♣Q3            ♣A52

♠83  
♥7543  
♦J7  
♣KJ1064

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		
N							4
S						11	20
E	4	6	7	7	7		5
W	4	6	7	7	7		

Our redemption was Board 18

Bd: 18      ♠Q75  
Dlr.: E      ♥4  
Vul: NS     ♦QT87  
                 ♣98542

♠K62            ♠A84  
♥AK1085      ♥963  
♦32             ♦AK95  
♣AK7           ♣Q103

♠J1093  
♥QJ72  
♦J64  
♣J6

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		
N							4
S						17	13
E	4	4	6	4	6		6
W	4	4	6	4	6		

We (EW) bid and made 6♥ by West while our teammates took 6♥X off one for +14 IMPs. With a 5♠ lead, declarer reasoned that there was a potential spade loser and almost certainly at least one heart loser (there only being none if the QJ was doubleton).

Declarer won the trick with the ♠A in dummy and led ♥9, South didn't cover and Declarer ducked in dummy. After North plays ♥4 Declarer places the Queen and Jack in South's hand. Declarer finesse's again and if Queen or Jack don't fall, wins in dummy with the 10. Declarer now discovers the 4-1 split, but needs two trumps from dummy for the Diamond ruff.

Declarer returns to dummy leading a ♦ to the Ace, then plays the King. At this point declarer led a third diamond, and when covered by the Jack, discarded a Spade from hand. No matter what South leads, declarer wins in hand, draws the last two trumps playing the A and K, then plays out the clubs and the spade K having the ♥8 for the last small spade.

At the other table, the double should have given declarer a hint. The double has given declarer the information that the hearts split unevenly with the honours all in South's hand. The double is really not worth doing, especially in IMPs.

In this case the pay-off was a score of 100 rather than 50 for one additional IMP. On the flip side, if they had made the contract you are giving away an additional 230 points, which also only translates to one IMP.

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## Partnership Bidding

It doesn't matter how much an individual player knows about bidding, bidding is a language. To be successful you have to both agree on how the language is used.

Some hands highlight how differently partnerships might approach bidding. A good example is [Board 11](#) from IBARB on 13 April. North and South held:

Bd: 13	♠ K Q T
Dlr: S	♥ K Q 3
Vul: Nil	♦ A K J 8
	♣ A 8 3
	♠ A 8 7
	♥ A 7 6 4
	♦ Q 7
	♣ K 7 2

Played by eight pairs, all the Souths opened 1♥. Three Norths bid 2♦, and four went straight to 4NT. One of each of these wound up breaking down by partner not properly responding to Blackwood and finished in 5NT and 4NT respectively.

One each of the remaining 2♦ responses ended in 6NT and 6♥, while all the pairs that jumped first to 4NT finished in a heart slam (one bidding grand slam). All bar one of the heart contracts were doubled.

What of the eighth pair? North jumped ignored the heart fit and jumped straight to 6NT. Looking at the hand, 22 HCP opposite opening guarantees at least 34 and so small slam is on (the pair is missing at most one Ace). North has first or second round control in all suits, and no ruffing opportunities.

The heart contracts were doubled because West held five hearts to the Jack. NS can make at best 11 tricks in Hearts, while 6NT will make. What could NS learn from the double? It can only mean something about the trump distribution; an alert North would use the information to switch back to No Trumps.