

From the Editor

It's been a very busy time down here in the Illawarra. We had to move the Chris Diment Congress but took the opportunity to increase our capacity to 40 tables. In the crowd, you mightn't have noticed the extent of Australian representatives we had.

Paul Lavings and Peter Gill have already headed off to play for the Australian Seniors team in the Asia Cup (<https://www.abf.com.au/australian-teams-set-for-asia-cup-in-goal/m>), (Peter and Paul have represented Australia many times.). Peter and his partner Liz Sylvester played in the Mixed Team at last year's World Bridge Championships. (<https://www.abf.com.au/australian-representative-teams/meet-the-teams/#25mixed>).

Natalie Newman and Ida Andersen are members of the Under 26 Women's Team and Adrian Le is a member of the Under 26 Team playing in the World Youth Transnational Championships in August (<https://www.abf.com.au/2026-australian-youth-teams/>).



Ida Andersen, Peter Gill, Natalie Newman and Liz Sylvester playing the final round of the Swiss Pairs at Table 1

Peter has kindly provided some hand analysis for this newsletter.

Veni, Vidi, Vici

Mitch Dowling could have borrowed this famous phrase on his way back to Sydney after the Congress. Julius Caesar coined it to describe his swift and decisive victory in the Battle of Zela, but he and his troop of youth players could equally cry that they came, saw and conquered.

As they plunged through the fog on their way back to Sydney (as described in their Facebook post <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Vij5pSx4j/>), they could enjoy their impressive results. In the Swiss Pairs, youth teams came 4th (1st Intermediate), 6th (1st Restricted), 10th (1st Novice) and 17th. In the Swiss Teams, youth teams came 3rd, 10th (1st Intermediate) and 11th (1st Restricted).

Mitch is the Executive Officer of Bridge NSW. Together with Alan Stoneham, Aaron Poon and Edmond Lee, Mitch runs the Youth Bridge Nights at the Sydney Bridge Centre. These four, as well as Liam Mnogue and Zara Chowdhury from Canberra and Nico Ranson, are not long out of the youth category.

Contact Mitch at youth@bridgensw.com.au if you want to know more about Youth Bridge.

Management Committee

Following the survey of members, the Tournament Committee recommended to the Management Committee (MC) that we trial an additional club duplicate session on Monday afternoons at Figtree. The MC has decided that this will start on a trial basis from July - see further details later in the newsletter.

Following concerns from members that they had been misled into thinking that the water dispenser offered filtered water the MC has investigated both the cost of filtered water and the cost of replacing the dispenser to solve the leaking tap. It was concluded that we will continue to simply use Sydney tap water and that a sign will be placed on it advising that it is tap water AND to ensure the tap is off after use.

The Management Committee (MC) noted that the Birthday Party was a great success. In doing so they made a note of improvements that could be made. These include the use of the tables in the Eastern Hall to eat lunch at as well as requesting details of what savoury dishes members plan to bring so that the ordered food can complement rather than duplicate these items.

The Biggest Morning Tea (afternoon of 23 May) raised \$1,200 for the Cancer Council. Kaye and the rest of the MC thank members for their generosity.

Vale – Fayez Michail

Fayez Michail passed away in June at the age of 89. Fondly remembered as a gentle soul, Fayez joined the club in August 2018. Those who spent time with him know he lived a colourful life!

His appearance in drag at one Melbourne Cup party had many people guessing who it was for much of the afternoon.

Vale – Margaret Spira

Margaret Spira, life member of IBA, passed away just before this newsletter went to press peacefully at home in the company of her family. She is being privately cremated.

She will be remembered for her work in the early days of IBA, especially organising the congresses.

Convenor's Report on the 2026 Chris Diment Congress

From Grant's first contact with Kembla Grange Racecourse, to Jeff's question, "What about 40 tables?", and the members of IBA coming together as a team, the momentum quickly built for our biggest Congress yet. Timelines and task lists were prepared, with members taking on a wide range of responsibilities. We advertised on the Bridge NSW website, and flyers were prepared, printed and distributed to regional clubs and other congresses. Jeff and committee members also visited the racecourse to confirm the room layout for bridge and discuss the weekend's requirements with Bradie from the Illawarra Turf Club.

Don coordinated transport of the equipment to the racecourse for Friday afternoon set-up and back again on Sunday evening. This included collecting equipment from IBAND and Figtree to align with the racecourse's availability and the end of the bridge sessions. It was wonderful to see so many members involved in checking and gathering the necessary equipment, bringing it to the venue, then packing it up and returning it to Figtree and Thirroul so normal sessions could resume this week.

It was especially pleasing to see so many youth players, with nine pairs each day. It was also pleasing to see the number of less experienced players taking part in the Congress. Feedback indicates that most participants thoroughly enjoyed the event and would be happy to return next year. We will review the feedback in detail and address the concerns raised.

A sincere thank you to Jeff and Rob, our directors, for running the bridge sessions so efficiently; to Bradie and the Illawarra Turf Club for looking after us throughout the weekend; to Kaye and the caddies for responding quickly to the players' needs; and to all our IBA volunteers, whose teamwork made the Congress possible.



*Liz Sylvester and Peter Gill (Pairs winners and members of the winning team)
with IBA President and Tournament Organiser Marie Pickering*

Results – Major Events and Congresses

The club's major event, the annual **Chris Diment Congress**, was contested on 13 and 14 June. Aspects of the congress are covered elsewhere in this newsletter. Here we celebrate and congratulate the prize winners.

Swiss Pairs



Liz Sylvester and Peter Gill

- 1st Open Liz Sylvester and Peter Gill
- 2nd Open Mitch Dowling and Alan Stoneham
- 3rd Open Grant Cowen and Steve Szatmary



Mitch Dowling and Alan Stoneham

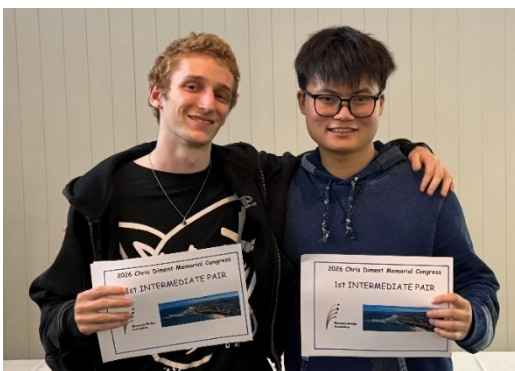


Grant Cowen and Steve Szatmary

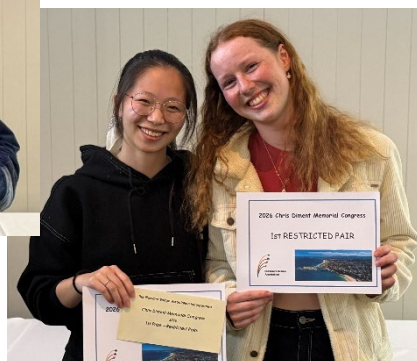
1st Intermediate – Nongrun 'Edward' Li and Noah Klugman

1st Restricted – Natalie Newman and Ida Andersen

1st Novice - David Zheng and Shannon Ooi



Noah Klugman and Edward Li



Ida Andersen and Natalie Newman



Shannon Ooi and David Zheng

1st Super Novice – Greg Connor and Tony Nicholls

Best Local – Maggie and Dave Havatt



Greg Connor and Tony Nicholls



Dave and Maggie Havatt

Swiss Teams

1st Open Edmond Lee, Nico Ranson, Liz Sylvester and Peter Gill

2nd Open Ian Jamieson, Michael Machado, Kamalesh Gupta and Glen Chick

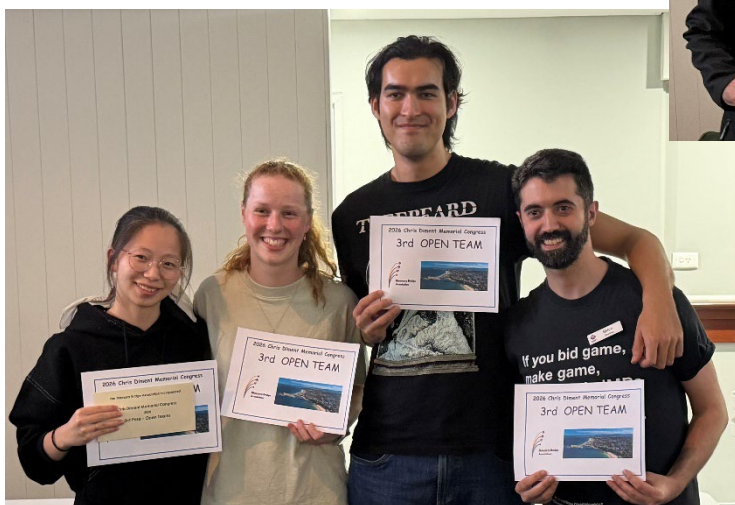
3rd Open Natalie Newman, Ida Andersen, Alan Stoneham and Mitch Dowling



Nico Ranson, Liz Sylvester, Peter Gill and Edmond Lee



Ian Jamieson, Michael Machado, Kamalesh Gupta and Glen Chick



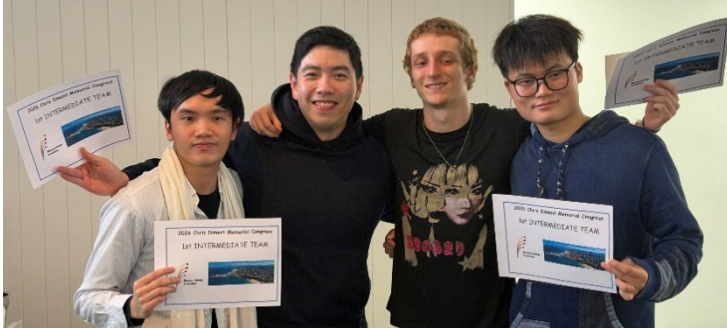
Natalie Newman, Ida Andersen, Alan Stoneham and Mitch Dowling

1st Intermediate –Duncan Lai, Aaron Poon, Nongrun' Edward' Li and Noah Klugman

1st Restricted – David Zheng, Shannon Ooi, Adrian Le and Dinh' Tintin' Nguyen

1st Novice - Lyndall Kennedy, Kate Latimer, Leanne Sellick and Philip Sellick

Best Local Team – Grant Cowen, Steve Szatmary, Liz and Steve Hurley



Duncan Lai, Aaron Poon, Nongrun' Edward' Li and Noah Klugman

Shannon Ooi, David Zheng, Adrian Le and Dinh' Tintin' Nguyen



Lyndall Kennedy, Kate Latimer, Leanne Sellick and Philip Sellick

*Grant Cowen, Liz and Steve Hurley
(inset Steve Szatmary)*



The club participated in the 2026 **Australia Wide Novice Pairs** on 27 May. Our local winners, Chris Fergusson and Tom Malcher (pictured), finished 78th Australia Wide with a score of 61.6%.



Chris Fergusson started playing bridge at the Illawarra Bridge Association, mainly at Figtree but also at Thirroul, in late 2019. He took up bridge after retirement and plays up to 4 sessions a week. He says playing bridge is most enjoyable and always challenging .

Tom Malcher started bridge at the IBA Figtree on his return to Wollongong in 2021 after retirement and 2 years in Canberra. His two sessions a week quickly doubled to four enjoyable sessions along with attending congresses in Mollymook, Orange and our own Chris Diment. Friendships also came easy at both Figtree and Thirroul which has added to an enjoyable retirement.

IBA members performed well in the teams event at **Sapphire Coast Congress** on the weekend of 18 and 19 April. Kaye Hart and Jeff Carberry, playing with Tom and Jan Hackett from the Yarrowonga Bridge Club, came 2nd, while Carol Jeffs, Julie Cowling and Carolyn Githens, playing with Jennette Rosetta of Wagga Wagga but I believe previously from IBA, came 4th.

Results - Club Events

The **Club Teams Championship** was contested on 2 and 9 May. Congratulations to the Hurley team on their win:

- 1st Stephen and Liz Hurley, Grant Cowen and Steve Szatmary
- 2nd Tim Marchant, Ian Porter, Stuart Cutsforth and Renate La Marra
- 3rd Marie Pickering, Carolyn Githens, Andrew Smith, Cathy Ashcroft and Cheryl Waters

The **Wednesday Teams Championship** was contested on 6 and 13 May. This provided another win for the Hurley team.

- 1st Stephen and Liz Hurley, Grant Cowen and Steve Szatmary
- 2nd Paul and Helen Lavings, Jeff Carberry and Rob Kinloch
- 3rd Steve Brell, Ian Porter, Stuart Cutsforth and Renate La Marra

These two events provided a solid warmup for the **Grand National Open Teams (GNOT) Qualifying** on 23 and 30 May. The top half of our field of 16 qualify for the Regional Final. The Hurley team pulled off the treble victory.

- 1st Stephen and Liz Hurley, Grant Cowen and Steve Szatmary
- 2nd Carol and Malcolm Kerr, Steve Dynan and Peter Graham
- 3rd Jeff Carberry, Paul and Helen Lavings, Vicky and Ian Lisle
- 4th Steve Brell, Rob Kinloch, Philip Barker, Ruth Neild and Ken Mcivor
- 5th Margaret Reid, Paul Woods, Ken Soldi, Sue Southern and Kaye Hart
- 6th Ian Porter, Tim Marchant, Martin Bunder and Bill Fotheringham
- 7th Shahla Vogl, Julie Cowling, Rilla England, Erica Gray, Brian Thorp and Carolyn Githens
- 8th Paula Corbett, Lynne Soldi, Ngaire Meehan, Elizabeth Cusack and Dave Gallagher

Upcoming Events

The **Past Presidents Cup and Shield** is coming up on 24 June and 1 July. Week one is a qualifying event which will be played as a two winner (Mitchell). The second week will see the best EW and NS pairs play in a one-winner event for the Cup, and the rest of the pairs in the one-winner Shield. The one-winner events will most likely be Howells.

If you can't play in both weeks it doesn't matter. The Cup field will be from the best pairs in each direction who play both weeks. Any pairs coming to only play the second week will get put into the field for the Shield.

Tuesday Pairs Championship is on 21 and 28 July, **State Teams Qualifier** is on 22 and 29 July (Wednesdays), **IBAND Pairs Championships** is on 8 July.

The **Karhof Trophy** is on 25 July and 1 August. **Statewide Pairs** is on 5 August.

New

*** Monday Afternoon Bridge ***

Our new Monday Afternoon session will commence after the school holidays in July with Dave Havyatt as the principal Director. The first session will be on 20 July at 1pm.

There will be a tri-weekly pairs champion from this session chosen as an eclectic of the best two results by a pair over the three weeks – so the first three-week period will be 20 and 27 July, and 3 August.

The survey respondents indicated that they would not be replacing any other session with this new session, it would be additional. We will monitor this closely. The greatest potential risk is to Monday night online.

Our online session is available to members from any club in Australia and at \$5 for all comers should be attractive to far more players. One Sydney club that runs many sessions of online bridge charges between \$14 and \$22 for a session. Club members are encouraged to promote this session to their bridge playing friends.

ABF Club Knockout Teams

We have two teams already planning to register for the ABF Knockout Teams starting in July. I encourage you all to consider putting a team together.

Five categories are available – and it would be nice to have one team in each. This is a Gold Point event for which you don't even have to leave home!

- Division 1: No masterpoint limit on players.
- Division 2: Open to players with fewer than 750 MPs
- Division 3: Open to players with fewer than 300 MPs
- Division 4: Open to players with fewer than 100 MPs
- Division 5: Open to players with fewer than 50 MPs

The matches are played on Tuesday nights at 7:30pm - 21 July, 18 August, 15 September, 13 October and 17 November. The first two sessions are qualifying, with the best eight teams in each division then playing knockout rounds (quarter finals, semi-finals and finals). The format may change depending on number of entries. For example, the Under 50 competition was played as a complete round robin in 2025.

Unlimited substitutions are allowed so there really is no excuse for not having a team in each category. Last year (the first time IBA has participated) our Under 50 masterpoint team came first, and our restricted team made it to the semi-finals.

Enter via MyABF - <https://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/4446>

Promotions

Congratulations to the following members on their recent promotions

April 2026

Grade	Name
National	Elaine Pretorius
Bronze State	Melissa Ardern
Regional	Bruce Loomes
Bronze Local	Cath Gregory Bevan Clouston Susan Furber
Club	Judith Foley

May 2026

Grade	Name
Bronze Local	Elena Pereloma
Graduate	Maria Czubala Paul Daly

helps us to get through a long day without one of us misinterpreting complex auctions.

Kickback is a form of Blackwood which uses 4♠ as setting hearts and asking for keycards. By the time the smoke cleared, Rob and Des were in 7♥ down five - 12 imps to us.

Meanwhile, Ida Andersen is a youth player, and so on this Board she opened 3♠. Natalie Newman raised to 6♠, which is a pretty good contract, but succumbs to bad breaks. Minus 50. So my team of Liz Sylvester - Peter Gill - Nico Ranson - Edmund Li. won the Teams and the Newman team finished 3rd only one VP behind the winners.

Nevertheless, the young pair, Natalie and Ida, from the 2026 Australian Under 26 Women's Team, topped the pair datums in the Teams and led the Pairs until the last round (Editor: where they played Peter and Liz – see photo on Page 1).

There were heaps of youth players around - they almost all like to bid a lot. In Round 1 the top seeded Lavings team showed how to deal with pesky youths

Bd: 3	♠ A	
Dlr: S	♥ 8 3	
Vul: EW	♦ A Q 10 6 3	
	♣ K J 6 3 2	
♠ 10 9 8 7 6 5		♠ J
♥ 7 6		♥ K J 9 5 2
♦ 9		♦ K 8 7 5
♣ A Q 8 7		♣ 9 5 4
	♠ K Q 4 3 2	
	♥ A Q 10 4	
	♦ J 4 2	
	♣ 10	

Helen Lavings (South) opened 1♠, Paul responded 2♦ and Noah Klugman is a youth player who rashly ventured 2♥. Because Double is for takeout, Helen smoothly passed. Paul at this juicy vulnerability re-

opened with a takeout double (where many players would wrongly bid 3♣). Helen converted to penalties. Helen and Paul collected 1100 (nicknamed 'sticks and stone's) with the next best score in the whole field being 490.

I don't know how many 2♥ bidders went unpunished The talented youth players fought back to defeat the top seeds. My opponents, Cheryl Waters and Marie Pickering, wisely stayed out of the auction and went on the win the match. The top two seeds both lost in Round 1 - rest assured that if someone overcalled 2H vs Liz and me, we would have got the 1100 too - the top players usually don't let vulnerable indiscretions go unpunished.

The key board in the Swiss Pairs on Saturday was Board 21 in the afternoon.

Bd: 21	♠ 4 3	
Dlr: N	♥ 3	
Vul: NS	♦ 9 7 5 3	
	♣ A 10 9 8 7 5	
♠ A J 6 5		♠ K 10 7 2
♥ A K Q 10 8 5		♥ J 9 7 2
♦ K J		♦ A 6 4
♣ J		♣ Q 4
	♠ Q 9 8	
	♥ 6 4	
	♦ Q 10 8 2	
	♣ K 6 3 2	

My opponents playing EW, Rob Hurst and Des Manderson, bid efficiently to 6♥ versus silent opponents. Of the 12 declarers in 6♥, 7 guessed SQ correctly and 5 went down. I led ♣A and continued with ♣10 to the King, ruffed. Des drew trumps on which I pitched ♣8, trying to look like a person with only A1098 in clubs. Trying to get as much information as possible before the vital guess, Des played off three rounds of diamonds, on which Liz Sylvester and I both

deliberately gave Des accurate reverse count by playing $\heartsuit 3$ and $\heartsuit 2$ first, suggesting we had four diamonds each.

Des had seen me with only 1 heart and Liz with 2 hearts, meaning there were 12 vacant places in my hand which could be $\spadesuit Q$, and only 11 vacant places in Liz's hand which could be $\spadesuit Q$. So the odds of Liz having $\spadesuit Q$ were 12 out of 23, more than 50%. Look in Wikipedia for Vacant Places if you're one of the few people who want to know more about this expert topic. If you can handle it, you might end up in your State team like Rob, Des and I are this year. Des's additional guesses about the diamonds and clubs shape didn't sway him from the odds, so down he went, and it was Liz Sylvester and I who therefore won the Swiss Pairs.

At another table, another pesky younger player ventured $2\clubsuit$ over Paul Lavings' $1\heartsuit$ opening bid. Helen and Paul brushed aside the interference to bid to $6\heartsuit$. $\clubsuit A$ was led then a club to the king. Paul needed to know 'Who had the black bitch?' It was a mad bid on just 4 points and Paul played the $2\clubsuit$ overcaller for SQ ... down one. Too much logic by Paul? This vulnerable indiscretion turned out well and propelled Paul's opponents Mitch Dowling and Alan Stoneham into 2nd place in the Pairs.

Also, in the Swiss Pairs the young pair of Zara Chowdhury and Liam Minogue had what they described as a 'really satisfying' outcome on Board 12 in the fifth match.

Liam described the bidding and play:

Zara opened the 13 HCP 1NT and I made a pushy gameforce to a 10-card fit...LOL.

South led $\spadesuit 4$. I expected N to win the $\spadesuit A$ and I suspected they had clubs for their minor.

So, I have two spade losers and 2 club losers, and maybe a heart.

My plan was to win any return, find a way to play the hearts for no losers, cash 3 rounds of diamonds ending in my hand, cash the $\spadesuit K$ and then exit a spade endplaying North to lead up to the $\clubsuit K$ or concede a ruff/discard.

I was pretty sure I had read in one of the declarer play books about 10 card fits missing the KJ and I needed to try to pin the singleton J. My plan was to run the $\heartsuit Q$.

Anyway, at trick 2 North returned a small spade, and I let it run to the J. No endplay anymore, but I still had to solve the hearts.

I played a diamond to the Ace and said to my ops (Edmund Lee and Nico Ranson) "I'm pretty sure this is how you're supposed to do it." and BOOM it worked!

Would've been cooler if I had gotten to do the endplay.

Bd: 12 $\spadesuit A Q 10 5 2$
 Dir: W $\heartsuit J$
 Vul: NS $\diamond 9 6 4$
 $\clubsuit A Q J 4$

$\spadesuit J 9 8$ $\heartsuit A 10 9 7 6$ $\diamond K Q 3$ $\clubsuit K 8$	$\spadesuit K 7 6$ $\heartsuit Q 8 5 4 2$ $\diamond A 7 5$ $\clubsuit 9 2$
--	---

$\spadesuit 4 3$
 $\heartsuit K 3$
 $\diamond J 10 8 2$
 $\clubsuit 10 7 6 5 3$

WEST <i>Chowdhury</i>	NORTH <i>Ranson</i>	EAST <i>Minogue</i>	SOUTH <i>Lee</i>
1NT	2 \spadesuit^*	3 \heartsuit	Pass
4 \heartsuit	All Pass		

* Spades and a minor

Rilla's Member Corner

This month, Michael Turner reminisces on bridge at Thirroul

I started my bridge life with lessons on Saturdays at the Master Builders. Alex Tavan later also took the lessons.

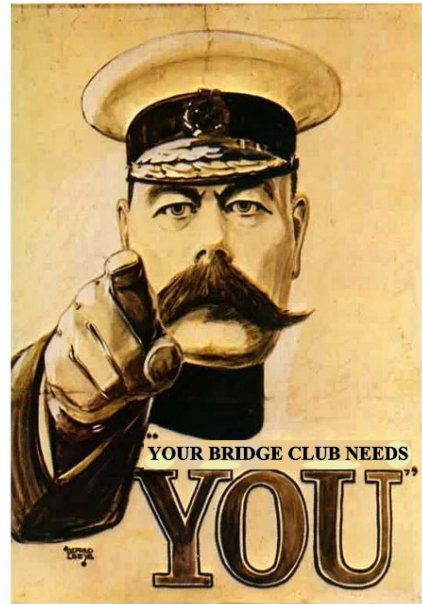
We soon formed a partnership and joined playing in the weekday events. Alex lived in Thirroul and travelled to play in Wollongong with me. One of the players told us about IBAND at Thirroul.

I was happy to travel to Thirroul to play with Alex to return the favour. We soon became regular participants. The Thirroul crowd mainly lived walking distance from the hall and made us welcome from day one.

I've played at Thirroul for probably over 10 years. The games are friendly and competitive without any win-at-all-cost issues.

I will continue to play there as long as I have a partner. I turn up early to set tables up ready to play. Hopefully the willingness of the volunteers continues and IBAND has a bright future.

Directors Needed



IBA has been blessed with some very great Directors. After Chris Diment passed Jeff Carberry took up the cudgels and is a National Director. Nowadays he is in high demand at congresses and national events.

Rob and Andrew have carried a heavy directing load at Figtree, as has Barb at Thirroul. Grant, Jill, Stuart and Marie cover the load outside of our three main sessions.

This isn't anywhere near as many Directors as the club should have. It is also an unfortunate fact that every year they become another year older.

The Directors would like to train some more Directors. In some clubs they divide the role between a Scorer and a Director. The former drives the computer and Bridgemates, while the latter makes rulings on irregularities at the table. If you think you'd like to do just one of the functions we'd like to know.

Please speak to Jeff, Rob or Dave if you have even the slightest interest.

Promotions

Congratulations to the following members on their recent promotions

April 2026

Grade	Name
National	Elaine Pretorius
Bronze State	Melissa Ardern
Regional	Bruce Loomes
Bronze Local	Cath Gregory
	Bevan Clouston
	Susan Furber
Club	Judith Foley

May 2026

Grade	Name
Bronze Local	Elena Pereloma
Graduate	Maria Czubala
	Paul Daly



JOAN BUTTS BRIDGE WORKSHOP KIAMA & DISTRICT BRIDGE CLUB



Learn to play bridge with one of Australia's most popular and respected bridge teachers, Joan Butts.

Joan is a well-known bridge personality who has played the game since she was 25 and has represented Australia. She has taught thousands to play over thirty years and now focuses on teaching through her Online School of Bridge.

Saturday 4th July 2026

Session one: 10AM - 12PM Declarer Play

Session two: 1PM - 3PM Two Over One Game Force

To register, contact: Ann Email: annblue50@hotmail.com Phone: 0413 731 146

****\$25/HEAD PER SESSION IS PAYABLE ON THE DAY****

Feature Article -- Golf, tennis, bridge: all the same

By James Marsh Sternberg, Palm Beach FL

This is a slightly abridged version of an article that first appeared in the April 2026 Bulletin of the International Bridge Publishers Association. Reproduced with permission of the publisher.

Let's look at some different sports, and compare some of their physical and psychological factors to our favourite mind sport, bridge. One aspect that is different is how to judge your game.

Golf is a quantitative game. If I ask you how you played, whether you say you shot 75 or 95, I can picture your game. But bridge is like tennis; both are qualitative games.

If I ask you how you played tennis today, and you say you played great, what does that mean? Who did you play against? In tennis, were you playing against a player who could hardly walk, or a hot-shot college player? In bridge, it's the same. Were you playing in the locker-room of a country club, where all your mistakes go unnoticed, or were you in the top bracket of a regional knockout?

In bridge, playing Matchpoints is like golf. You need to beat the whole field to win. In a Team game, playing IMPs, you only need beat your opponent.

Your score doesn't matter as long as it's better than the one other guy. It's like the joke about two guys being chased by a bear. One says, "We need to outrun the bear." The other says, "No, I only need to outrun you."

Let's look at golf. In an article in Golf Monthly, September 2013, sports psychologist Gary Leboff said,

"Mind coaches are a modern thing, but great players have been using their brains to gain an advantage for decades." Is that true? I went back to see what some of the old masters had to say.

"Golf," said Bobby Jones, "is played on a five-inch course – the distance between your ears."

Let's see what some other legends like Walter Hagen, Sam Snead, Ben Hogan, and Tommy Armour said about golf and apply these ideas to bridge.

Probably the best was Walter Hagen. The secret behind his success was his mind; he didn't have a great swing. He said one needs to be realistic. He said he expected to make at least seven mistakes each round, so when he hit a bad shot, he didn't worry. It was just one of those seven.

Leboff called this a "screw-up allowance". Instead of seeking an unobtainable level of consistency, Hagen took a realistic view and worked with what he had.

Unrealistic expectations both in golf and bridge are a plague among amateurs. Too many lose their temper and concentration at the first sign of a mistake, not giving themselves a screw-up allowance. In bridge, one of the most common errors players make is dwelling on their mistakes, resulting, of course, in another mistake on the next deal. One of the things that makes Bob Hamman so good is his ability to put the last deal behind him.

Bridge, like golf, is not a game of perfection; it's trying to make fewer mistakes than the other guy. It's not a matter of who hits the greater number of perfect shots or makes the great plays. So, take some pressure off your game. Add a safety net. Copy Hagen's

attitude to allow for some errors and focus on the next deal.

Like hitting fairways and greens, success in bridge comes from getting the basics right, not misplaying the easier deals, and allowing yourself to perhaps misplay a double squeeze.

Sam Snead talked about intensity – taking it easy. He was famous for being smooth. On the morning of a tournament, he made a point of doing everything slower, even brushing his teeth slower. This wasn't about dental hygiene. Both golfers and bridge players struggle with the heightened intensity of playing.

You hit the ball better on the driving range than on the course. You make a hand while reading about it, but not at the table. So, take a tip from Sam. Before playing bridge, do everything a bit slower. Eat slower, walk slower, drive slower, even brush your teeth slower. Slowing down your routine lowers your heart rate, settles your breathing, and calms your metabolism, adding to a sense of being more in control.

Ben Hogan said, "Be instinctive. If the hole looks one way, play it that way." While he was famously obsessed with technique, he was primarily instinctive on the course.

Bridge is similar. After you have played long enough, you begin to recognise the theme of a deal, and once recognised, you have a feel of how to play.

Another instinct you develop is table feel. Yes, you need to know some percentages to play, but so many things are going on at the table. Hogan said, "Never fight your eye when looking at a hole." We are all born with instinctive behaviour. External gadgets might help, but the real difference comes

from within. My favourite partner, the great Freddy Hamilton, so often said to me, "Jimmy, get your face out of your hand". What he meant was there are lots of things going on around the table; pay attention. Of course, Freddy was famous as having the best table feel of anyone.

Tommy Armour was known for course management. His views were, "It's not the great shots that make champions, but the ability to make fewer bad shots." In bridge, we need to play the basic hands correctly – we don't have to make brilliant newspaper plays.

Armour said understanding how the brain works is important, and this applies to bridge as well. The left side is logical and rational; the right side is creative and spontaneous. Both sides have their role, but are often used the wrong way. A golf shot or bridge play should be planned with the left side, by making a logical decision.

Too many players work the other way around: devising the most creative ways of playing, rather than just getting the job done.

In Golf World (July 22, 2013), Gio Valiante discussed how sports psychology has become so acceptable. He discussed process over short-term outcome, since in golf, like bridge, a player loses much more than he wins. Therefore, attaching personal well-being like happiness, personal identity, confidence, motivation, to short-term outcome generally undermines long-term performance.

He stressed playing one shot at a time, the oldest cliché in the book. Or in the case of bridge, putting the previous deal out of your mind and focusing on the next.

Let's turn now to tennis and compare it to bridge. Look at some of the physical, and especially some psychological, factors affecting your bridge game, and compare them now to tennis.

In an article from Tennis magazine on how to become a better tennis player, the late well-known tennis coach Nick Bollettieri made five main points.

Let's look at each one and see how they relate to bridge, since they emphasise discipline, empathy, camaraderie, patience, all the features of growing a successful partnership as well as self-improvement.

1) *Be steady. Unforced errors lose matches.*

It's the same at the table; you don't have to hit a winner on every deal. Instead, it's about not making basic mistakes, knowing the necessary percentage plays. Nick says, it's rare when a player commits more errors and still wins the match. Make the hands (shots) you are supposed to make. In a Team game, a 51% game wins.

2) *Get in better physical shape.*

Yes, bridge is a physical game. Staying in there for the whole match without getting tired means getting plenty of rest, not overeating or drinking before playing. Matches are often won or lost near the end, when other players may be tired. Also, others, not having a winning game, will be losing focus, not concentrating. You want to be still sharp to take advantage of these opportunities. You want to still "be there".

3) *Do what you do best.*

Have faith in your system if bidding is your strong point. If you are behind in a match, a

good player is not afraid to let his instinct get in the way, if that is one of his strong points.

4) *Play, don't pray.*

Make things happen. Yes, unforced errors lose matches, but your opponent isn't going to make many if you just sit there, hitting the ball back weakly. More preempting, moving things around, mixing it up at the table as on the court, and more "unforced errors" by your opponents will surely follow.

The great Al Roth, when playing IMPs, was a solid citizen, playing steady since a 51% game wins. But playing Matchpoints, 51% won't even scratch. Edgar Kaplan said that while Roth was a steady rock playing Teams, in Matchpoint events it seemed a board did not go by without him doing something. Playing Pairs, rather than two 51% games, I'd rather have one 65%, one 45%. The former wins; the latter... well, things didn't quite work out.

5) *Have an attitude.*

Yes, everything being equal, you need a mental edge to win matches. All the good players play the 3NT hands the same way. But you want to have a winning attitude; not rude, just the table everyone hopes to skip.

When you are in trouble on a deal, continue to exude confidence. Remember, likely you are the only one at the table who knows you may have no idea what you are doing. Defensive mistakes are more likely coming if you don't give off negative vibes. Like the top tennis pros, good players don't give in. Down 5-0 in a set, they still act like they are going to win. They keep trying on every board (point), being able to forget the last board.

How Much Should You Pay for a Session of Bridge?

By Dave Havyatt

At dinner during the Tasmanian Festival of Bridge in 2025, the Chair of Bridge Victoria, Jan van Riel, suggested to me that players in country clubs aren't paying enough for a bridge session. I thought it was an interesting position but didn't think much about it until I was the Tournament Organiser for the State Mixed Pairs (SMP) this year.

Continuing a recent trend, we didn't have enough country pairs playing to run a Country Mixed Pairs Final. One club simply stated that without a travel subsidy they would not have any pairs prepared to play.

Bridge NSW abolished travel subsidies in 2024 because they had doubled annual capitation fees and did not see how they could justify transferring funds from one group of clubs (metropolitan) to another (country). In partial compensation, the entry fee for pairs from country clubs in SMP was lower than for metropolitan clubs.

Sports and games that are organised with local, state and national bodies can be either trickle down or trickle up. The sports with high profiles and thus extensive revenue from sponsorship and broadcast rights are expected to send some of that revenue to support the "grassroots" of the code.

But most games or sports are not like that, and the revenue to run the game at state and national level is derived from lower levels. Bridge is one of these games, though, oddly, both the state and national body directly levy the clubs. Importantly, the ABF partially funds Australian Teams traveling to World or Zone events and Bridge NSW partially funds NSW teams competing in the Australian National Championships.

The funding for Bridge NSW comes from three sources¹. The first is the capitation fee charged to each club based on the number of members (a bit over \$200K in 2025). The second is any surplus from events and tournaments (a bit over \$20K). The third is interest (a bit over \$15K).

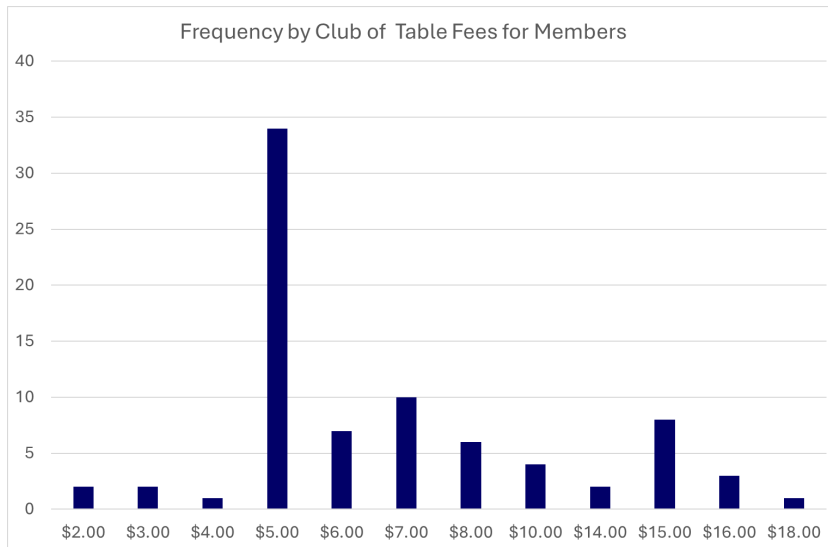
The issue with pairs or teams competing from country areas is made less severe by the movement of more events on-line (e.g. State Pairs and Teams Finals, GNOT Qualifying Final). But the issue with SMP brought to mind Jan's comment in Tasmania.

This led me to conduct an analysis of the table fees paid NSW Clubs. There were 81 for which I could find data on their website. The fee charged for club members range from \$2 to \$18 per regular session. Some clubs charge a premium for special event days where red points were awarded.

The average was a shade under \$7.50, however weighting the average by the number of home club members brought this to just shy of \$10. The frequency of the different prices is shown

¹ Source BNSW Annual Report <https://bridgensw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Annual-Report-2025-signed.pdf>

below. Most clubs charged a higher fee for visitors, with the premium ranging from zero to five dollars.



There were marked differences between metropolitan and country clubs, with metro clubs generally charging more, and clubs with more members charging more.



Costs are higher for metropolitan clubs. However, the clubs charging \$14 or more all have paid directors and other paid staff. Because bigger fields award more masterpoints per player, it might be argued that clubs with bigger sessions need to charge more. However, the cost of masterpoints is never going to work out at more than 30 cents per player for green point events, and 40 cents for red.

Prior to COVID, stickiness of price points could be explained by ease of collecting table fees. Post COVID with fees paid by bank transfers or by MyABF table fees could be increased in cents not dollars.

IBA isn't short of revenue for the activities we do, but the question is how much more could we and clubs like ours do if we charged slightly higher table fees?