



Management Committee News

Telstra Bigpond

Telstra's Bigpond service has blocked emails from admin@illawarrabridge.com.au. At 4:15pm, Telstra advised (through their CEO Complaints Team) that they had sorted it out, only for test emails to fail. Until this problem is fixed, Grant Cowen will relay all emails to members using these email addresses from his own email address. We want to apologise for this taking so long to complete.

Migration to MyABF for Table Fees

The use of MyABF for table fees is now well established for Thursday nights. The next session to convert will be the Tuesday afternoon session. Almost all regular Tuesday players are already registered MyABF users.

If you haven't become a registered MyABF user, try setting yourself up. The instructions are simple. There are a host of resources on the ABF website to help you:

<https://www.abf.com.au/member-services/my-abf-resources/players/>

If you want help, ask Marie, Grant or Dave Havyatt.

Directors Workshop

The Directing Committee of Bridge NSW is running a workshop on the Friday before our congress, 13 June, at our Figtree Hall. The content for the workshop is being selected based on surveys of our club and requests from neighbouring clubs that are also invited.

The workshops will be of value to existing directors, aspiring directors, and players who want to better understand the laws of the game we play. Registration will be required to assist with catering. Watch out for an email with details.

Phil Barker

Phil Barker has stepped down from the Management Committee and as newsletter editor for personal reasons. Many thanks to Phil for his stewardship. Dave Havyatt has offered to step up from assistant to editor.

Phil's other role was the chief purchaser of libations or the wine steward. If you want to help in this very important role, please talk to Marie.

Membership

Our annual' reckoning is the March list of home club members with the ABF Masterpoints Centre". Despite attracting 25 new players to our game our total home club membership has declined by 2 to 243. This is just a reminder that we have to do a lot of work to stand still.

Recent Results

Central West Festival

The Central West Festival is a new kid on the block in the list of Gold Point Events. These are national events notionally run by the ABF, which licences Bridge NSW to run the event. In its turn Bridge NSW engages an organising association to organise the event.

That, at least, is the theory. In practice, the event came about from the ground up as a proposal from the committee organising the highly successful Australian National Championship in July last year. The small committee (Murray Paterson, Anne Tonna, Jenny King and Rob Ward) received strong support from the City of Orange and community leaders to host an event with 80 tables for pairs and teams competitions across four grades: Open, Intermediate, Restricted and Novice.

20 (I think) Illawarra members played across these competitions with highly impressive results. In addition, Ian Lisle was present throughout as a Director. Best place finishes by IBA teams in each division were (non-IBA players in the teams are italicised):

Pairs

Open	1 st Paul and Helen Lavings
Intermediate	3 rd Roger and Glenda McNee
Restricted	7 th Dave and Maggie Havyatt
Novice	6 th Ngaire Meehan and Julie Rollinson

Teams

Open	5 th Elaine Pretorius, Steve Geddes, <i>Craig Becconsall</i> , and <i>Anita Delorenzo</i>
Intermediate	8 th Roger McNee, Glenda McNee, <i>Anne Verschuer</i> , and <i>Margaret Edward</i>
Restricted	1 st Melissa Ardern, Conny Szency, <i>Shannon Queree</i> , and <i>Kathy Duke</i>
Novice	4 th Don Clark, Tom Malcher, Ngaire Meehan, and Aileen O'Brien



Figure 2: Restricted Teams winners - IBA players Melissa Ardern and Conny Szency (at each end)



Figure 1: Open Pairs winners, Helen and Paul Lavings with bookshop

Lorna O'Leary took the initiative to invite all the IBA players to gather for dinner at the Duntryleague Golf Club on Friday night. 17 of the contingent enjoyed a fabulous meal together.



All congresses are a lot of fun. The bigger the event, the more stratified the field can be; two days of only playing players closer to your own level is a totally different experience from playing club bridge. The big events are especially enjoyable when we can get a good-sized IBA group together. What are your congress plans for this year and next?

Mixed Pairs Championship

The club **Mixed Pairs Qualifying and Championship** was held on 8 and 15 February. The event was played as a two-winner event.

North-South

- 1st Paul and Helen Lavings
- 2nd Kaye Hart and Jeff Carberry
- 3rd Jillian MacRae and Phil Barker

East-West

- 1st Stuart Cutsforth and Renate La Marra
- 2nd Liz and Steve Hurley
- 3rd Carolyn Githens and Peter Graham

Best wishes to the IBA pairs that choose to compete in the State Final on 17 and 18 May.

Club Teams Championship

The Teams Championship on 29 March and 5 April. Congratulations to:

- 1st Stephen Hurley, Liz Hurley, Steve Szatmary and Grant Cowen
- 2nd Robert Kinloch, Ken Mcivor, Stephen Brell, Ruth Neild and Colin Bale
- 3rd Paul Lavings, Helen Lavings, Jeff Carberry, Kaye Hart, Ian Lisle and Vicky Lisle

Upcoming Events

The biggest event coming up is our birthday party on 3 May! Saturday, 24 May, will be our 'Biggest Morning Tea' charity day.

After that, the next big event is the **Chris Diment Memorial Congress** on 14 and 15 June at the Builders Club. This is filling fast; six weeks out, it is nearly half full. If you plan to participate, don't delay. Registration is, of course, through MyABF <https://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/2343>

Special club events coming up are:

- Wednesday Teams – 7 and 14 May
- Australia-Wide Novice Pairs – Wednesday, 28 May
- Grand National Open Teams (GNOT) Qualifier – Saturdays, 24 and 31 May
- Past Presidents Cup and Shield – Wednesdays, 25 June and 2 July

The GNOT is the only event we play at the club where you can earn gold masterpoints.

Promotions

Certificates for promotion are handed out in the club when they are received, but we aren't all there for every session. Lists of promotions between issues will now be published in the newsletter.

February 2025

Graduate	Vicki Davison
Local	Don Clark
Bronze State	B Rewers
National	Julie Cowling
Life	Ken Soldi

March 2025

Graduate	Phillip Carey
Silver Grand	Vicky Lisle

Having picked up a neat 2.93 gold points in Orange, Don is closing in fast on Bronze Local!

What do masterpoints mean to you?

Masterpoints mean different things to different people. You can choose to ignore them, or you can choose to celebrate them.

They are an imperfect way of comparing your personal performance over time and against others. They are a very useful way of stratifying fields but become a two-edged sword. Doing well propels you into higher levels of tournament play. Whatever your personal view, we should celebrate the achievements of our club mates.

Around the State

Stratified fields

As mentioned before, big events like the Central West Festival provide the ability to play in stratified fields. There is a big difference between playing only novice players versus being only compared to other novice players in an 'all-in field.'

At the same time, everyone plays the same boards. This provides interesting comparisons. For example, the pair datums for two boards from the first round of the Swiss pairs at Orange showed these differences.

Board	Open	Intermediate	Restricted	Novice
1	-730	-590	-500	-540
6	970	980	770	610

On Board 1, there is an easy slam in spades for EW. In the open division, 15 of the 34 EW pairs bid a slam. Only 4 of 16 bid it in intermediate, 2 out of 16 in restricted and 2 out of 14 in novice.

On Board 6, a NS slam was bid by all the pairs except one. Two pairs didn't bid it in intermediate, while only two bid it in restricted. Ten bid it in novice, but three went off.

These events make it easy to identify the differences in outcomes between the top-performing players and the rest. This becomes even better when you can see how the whole hand was played when recorded or played online.

Getting smashed

Bridge NSW has developed two bridge 'leagues'. The Online Pairs League has been going for a few years now. It started on Thursday, moved to Tuesday, and now it's Monday. In addition, Bridge NSW has replaced the Monday night games that used to be played at the Sydney Bridge Centre (before mostly going online) with the Online Teams League.

The benefit of 'league' competition is the field is a very granular stratification. Promotion and relegation between seasons means that this will be based on performance over time, not something artificial like masterpoints.

To encourage participation in the new OTL, free entry was offered to teams entered by clubs. Our club decided to support the new tournament, but our team is getting smashed.

<https://nsw.bridgeaustralia.org/teamresults.asp?id=15421&umbid=996&iswide=y>

If you want to provide some advice or offer the team sympathy, all matches are available to view in the RealBridge kibbitzing section. https://kibitz.realbridge.online/#session_list. Just search results for Bridge NSW Online Teams League.

It would be nice to restore some IBA pride and have some of our top players participate next season. Just let Marie know if you are interested.

From the Editor

When writing for the newsletter, I sometimes wonder if I am just talking to myself. That is a worry.

The newsletter should be an important part of club communication and the development of our bridge community. It is a way for us to celebrate our successes and to identify opportunities for growth as players, growth in numbers and growth in activities.

To make the newsletter better, more relevant, or enjoyable, I need to know what you want to see. I thought of a survey, but this constrains you to just responding to my thoughts. Instead, I'm asking you to send me thoughts about what you like about our newsletter, what you don't like about it or things you would like to see in it to the new email address editor@illawarrabridge.com.au.

But to get you started....

- ♠ Do you prefer to receive the newsletter just by email, or would you prefer it if we print copies to distribute at the club?
- ♠ Would you like to see more "news" articles about things in bridge outside the club?
- ♠ Do you read *Bridging NSW*? Do you read the bridge columns in either of the Saturday papers? Do you read *Bridge Australia*?
- ♠ Would you like to see articles about hands (I can get these from various sources) from 'random' events?
- ♠ Would you like a series on 'common conventions and how to defend against them'?
- ♠ Would you like a 'hand from the club' section? We'd invite any player to nominate any hand from an IBA session for bidding and/or play analysis, and we'll get a panel of players to select from the nominations and write up a few.

That list is designed as just a starter.

As a not terribly experienced or top-level player, I can tell you that hand analysis in some of the more upmarket publications (including *Bridging NSW* and sometimes the columns in the paper) is frequently irrelevant to where my bridge game is up to. I think that means a gap can be filled – but I am a sample of one.

So please let me know what you would like (and what you wouldn't like). And feel free to provide any items you think would interest other members.

An observation

One of the Grand Masters at the club once observed that too many players add bidding gadgets to their system, which gets them into more marginal contracts that they don't have the skill to play.

The message is simple: developing your card play and bidding system together is important.