



From the Editor

This month, we have an abundance of results to report, as well as the first entries to Rilla's Member Corner. You don't need to be asked by Rilla to be included; feel free to write your own story and volunteer it.

We've included some interesting statistics about the improving health of bridge in NSW, and the success of the Australian Women's Team in the Venice Cup. And Paul is back with a note about another famous player in our midst.

The Chair of the Bridge NSW Clubs and Community Committee has been travelling the state organising Presidents' Days. On Friday, October 10, IBA is hosting a Presidents' Day for clubs in our region, which will be attended by members of the IBA Committee.

U3A

Following an approach by U3A Wollongong via Cathy Ashcroft, Dave Havyatt is running a social rubber bridge group through U3A, which will play at Collegians in Charlotte Street on Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon, starting October 14 (assuming Collegians don't object). Many club members are unfamiliar with rubber bridge, although it is the original form of contract bridge. The fundamental difference is that it is a contest between the two pairs at one table. The scoring involves making games, which can be achieved through part scores, and then making rubber. The difference in the scoring is detailed in the note on scoring in the documents section of the website.

We will assume that players have no prior experience with trick-taking card games and will start with a couple of weeks of whist, then move on to a couple of weeks of Minibridge-style bidding before learning the most basic possible system. It will be a system in which all opening bids at the 2 level are strong, and the only convention is Stayman 2♣. Members of IBA are welcome to join.

New State Championship Formats for 2026

Astute readers of the Bridge NSW calendar may have noticed two entries that don't look like events that have appeared before. On the weekend of May 16-17, they have scheduled Regional Finals for the State Mixed Pairs and State Mixed Teams. The Regional Finals for State Pairs and State Teams are scheduled for the weekend of September 19-20.

Clubs haven't been provided with details of these changes yet, and presumably, many could still change. The plan, as we understand it, is that nine country regional finals and one metropolitan final will all be played on the weekend. Each final will have competitions in three divisions – last seen as Open, Under Grand and Under Life. The winners from each regional final in each division will then compete in a state final online.

Bridge NSW is still finalising the details, and it could all still be put on hold for another year. As they say – watch this space!

Management Committee

The Management Committee met on October 4. The Committee is hoping to find some sponsors for the two congresses we hold at the Builders Club. If members are aware of any local businesses that may be interested, they should provide their contact details and a suggested approach to Chris Yates or Carolyn Githens.

The Committee has accepted an offer from Larry Regterschot to donate an award in honour of his late wife, Jill, for the most improved player each year. The Committee has determined that the trophy will be awarded based on the percentage increase in Masterpoints earned at IBA and IBAND sessions.

The Committee has decided not to conduct a Christmas Hamper Raffle this year. Instead, members will be encouraged to donate food and Christmas goodies for the Homeless Hub.

The July lessons have now finished. For this series of lessons, Marie trialled extending the course to eight weeks rather than the previous six. The trial was a great success, with ten of the eleven participants deciding to continue playing. These ten are part of the applications from fourteen new members (including non-home club members) who were accepted at the meeting.

Results

Canberra in Bloom

Fantastic results from two Novice pairs at Canberra in Bloom. Lorna O'Leary and Julie Rollinson won the Spider Orchid Novice Matchpoint Swiss Pairs. Paula Corbett and Don Clark then came third in the Federation Rose Novice IMP Swiss Pairs. Paula and Don also placed well in the Spider Orchid, coming in 11th. Congratulations to all four of them.

Grand National Open Teams

IBA sent its full quota of teams to the Tablelands-Illawarra Grand National Open Teams (GNOT) regional final played at Bowral on August 31. The Hurley team (Steve and Liz Hurley, Grant Cowen and Seve Szatmary) had a good win, followed by the Lavings team (Paul and Helen with Kaye Hart and Jeff Carberry). The Bunder, Pickering, and Ashcroft teams came in 4th, 5th, and 6th place.

Both the Hurley and Lavings teams qualified for the GNOT Qualifying Final held on 19-21 September. Unfortunately, player availability meant the Hurley team could not take their place.

The format of this event is a Knockout with a Swiss Repechage. The repechage process is fully explained in the Supplementary Regulations

(<https://abfevents.com.au/events/results/2025/gnt/docs/Supplementary%20Regulations.pdf>).

Getting knocked out early makes it harder to qualify through the repechage.

In brief, the Tablelands-Illawarra team suffered a poor first-round knockout match against Gold Coast 2. The match was decided on the first set of 12 boards and came down to three slam bids. On Board 6, the other side's EW bid and made 6♠, while IBA stopped at 4♠ but made two overtricks. On Board 8, IBA EW bid an unmakeable 6NT, where the opponent EW bid and made 3NT. On board 11, opponent NS bid and made 6♥ while IBA NS only bid to game but made two overtricks.

The event is available for kibitzing – Knockout Round 1 at <https://kibitz.realbridge.online/#250919227796-0>.

John Arkinstall State Open Teams (Incorporating Country Teams)

This event begins with our club qualifying event (Country Teams), where teams then progress to the regional final. Two IBA teams finished first and second in the regional final on June 1 (First – Steve Szatmary, Stephen Hurley, Liz Hurley, Grant Cowen; Second – Vicky Lisle, Ian Lisle, Jeff Carberry, Kaye Hart, Helen, Paul Lavings – though Paul and Helen did not play at the Regional Final).

The Hurley team was unable to take their place in the Zonal Final and were replaced by the third-placed Bowral team. The IBA team finished second in the Zonal Final.

The Southern Zone team will be represented in the State Final by the team from Batemans Bay (Andrew and Karen Creet, and Louise and Michael Brassil). This team won this year's Chris Diment Congress. We wish them all the best for the final, which will be played online from 28 to 30 November.

This may be the last year of this format for State Open Teams (see the Editorial).

Karhof Trophy

Played over two Saturdays (9 and 16 September) of arrow switched Web Mitchells, the Karhof Trophy was won by Paul and Helen Lavings.



The placings were:

- 1st Paul Lavings, Helen Lavings
- 2nd Ruth Neild, Stephen Brell
- 3rd Steve Szatmary, Grant Cowen

The state of the trophy was commented on by many at the presentation. Unfortunately, it isn't just a matter of polishing the cup; the silver plating has largely been rubbed away. Similarly, the plinth of the cup does not list all winners.

As trophies are no longer highly valued and restoration is expensive, the cup will be left as is. The Management Committee is considering options for maintaining a public record of past winners.

Club Pairs Championship

One of the two events that secures a place on the perpetual honours boards, the Club Pairs Championship was contested over 23 and 30 August. Congratulations to Stuart Cutsforth and Renate La Marra. They clearly returned well invigorated from their sojourn in Europe.

- 1st Stuart Cutsforth, Renate La Marra
- 2nd Paul Lavings, Helen Lavings
- 3rd Carol Kerr, Malcolm Kerr

Wednesday Championship and SOP Qualifying

Our Wednesday Pairs Championship also serves as our State Open Pairs Qualifying event. The Red Masterpoints issued at the State Champion level will be posted after the final on November 1 and 2.

Our event was played on 17 and 24 September, congratulations to the Hurleys.

- 1st Liz Hurley, Steve Hurley
- 2nd Stuart Cutsforth, Steve Brell
- 3rd Rob Kinloch, Jeff Carberry

The State Open Pairs Supplementary Regulations specify that the entire field in our qualifying event is qualified for the final on 1 and 2 November at the Sydney Bridge Centre in Goulburn Street. What this means in practice is that any pair that competed is eligible for the club representative entry fee rate of \$120 per pair, as opposed to \$200 for direct entry. Our club normally subsidises the entry of a few pairs. If you played and are interested, see Marie or Jeff.

This may be the last year of this format of State Open Pairs (see the Editorial).

ABF Knockout Teams

Our two teams competing in the ABF Knockout teams have had good results in the second two sessions on August 19 and September 23. Our Under 50 Masterpoint team racked up another

three wins and a loss to sit on top of their round robin table with two sessions (four matches) to go.

After a slow start in the first session (six matches), our Under 300 MP team picked up the pace over the next two sessions, with four wins and two losses in August, and five wins from five matches in September. The team has finished in third place and now faces Kenmore in the Semi-final. The IBA team beat Kenmore in the round robin, but four Board matches aren't a great guide.

You can find the dates they are playing and a link to the results on MyABF here <https://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/2905>

Upcoming Events

All events in the period Saturday, October 18 to Saturday, October 25 have been designated as our State **Under 100 Masterpoints (UHMP)** qualifying events. Players in this category can earn red masterpoints in all these sessions in stratified fields. The club will be hosting a **UHMP final** (open to all clubs and players do not need to have played in a qualifier) on November 30

Australia-wide Restricted Pairs -- October 22, with awards for Novice Pairs as well. Normal session for others on the day. Players can enter on the sheet at Figtree or turn up on the day.

Melbourne Cup – 10am start – Tuesday, November 4. The **Bridge starts at 10:30am**. Please refer to the sheet at the club to indicate what you will be bringing or if you will opt for the alternative. Some suggestions for things to bring are:

Savoury – sandwiches, party pies/sausage rolls/cocktail franks/other finger food such as salmon on blinis, cold meats on picks, cheeses

Sweets – home-made cakes or slices, shop-bought cakes or slices, chocolates (yum), fruit

November Charity Day and Week 1 of **Swiss Pairs** -- November 15

What is likely to be the last-ever **State Novice and Restricted Teams** will be held at Central Coast Bridge Club on the weekend of November 22-23. IBA won the Restricted category in 2016 and 2024, and the Novice category in 2016, 2022 and 2023. It does, unfortunately, clash with our AGM.

AGM and Week 2 of **Swiss Pairs** -- November 22. It is time to start thinking about what you could volunteer to do in 2026. Nominations for the Executive and Committee must be submitted on the provided form (available at the club and on the website) by November 15.

The **Central West Festival** returns for its second year in April. Registrations opened on October 1. At the time of writing, the Teams event is full, with 80 teams, and Pairs is almost full with 141 entries out of a possible 160. However, a number of the Team registrations are for only a single player or a pair, so if you are interested, you might still be able to enter by joining one of those teams.

Our Recent New Member – Paul Woods

By Paul Lavings

Paul Woods recently moved to the Illawarra and joined the IBA. When I saw Paul in the club, I was very excited because Paul is a very famous bridge personality.

Why is someone with 46 masterpoints who has an ABF number issued in the 1970s very famous? Because he is one name in a worldwide known convention, SWINE, which he played in the 1970s - Sebesfi-Woods-1NT-Extraction, a way of escaping from 1NT when opponents double.

Follow this link for a full explanation:

<https://www.acblunit390.org/Simon/swine.htm>

In 1985, after a week of studying medicine, Paul changed to aeronautical engineering. He played bridge with Bob Sebesfi in the mid-1970s but stopped playing before 1980.

We welcome him back to bridge.



Promotions

Congratulations to the following members on their recent promotions

Aug 2025

Grade	Name
Graduate	Penny Potter
Local	Bevan Clouston

Sep 2025

Grade	Name
Gold Life	Ruth Neild
Regional	Jane Johnson
Silver Local	Terry Hudson
	Wayne Hunt
Bronze Local	Paula Corbett
Graduate	Cathy Moore

Rilla's Member Corner

Andrew Smith

As a teenager, I often read and was fascinated by the Rixi Markus items in The Manchester Guardian, although I was unaware of the details of bridge bidding. I had played whist, so I knew something about tricks, trumps, and partnerships.

As a university student in 1959, I was taught bridge by another student, but he was an American exchange one, so he didn't use Acol like most British people. The system I learnt was Goren, which is not used nowadays and was very cautious in comparison to modern ideas, like having to have 13 HCP to open the bidding.

After joining a computer company, there was a club there, and I played in inter-club matches. I was also practising in local pubs. (Surprisingly allowed by landlords).

In my mid-twenties, I moved elsewhere, married, had children and then moved to Australia. I didn't play again until aged in my mid-fifties. I re-learnt bridge at Chris Diment's lessons and then played with several people, largely in evening sessions.

After a few years, I did a director's training course (with some other members) and luckily passed the test. After retiring, I thought there should be more daytime sessions for non-workers and started the Tuesday afternoon one.

'A thought about systems: It's usually better to have the stronger hand as declarer, so transfer systems are logical, not just after 1NT opening, but also after 1C. This idea is popular in Sydney, but not used here much. I was probably the first to use one at IBA (If interested, look up Transfer Walsh).

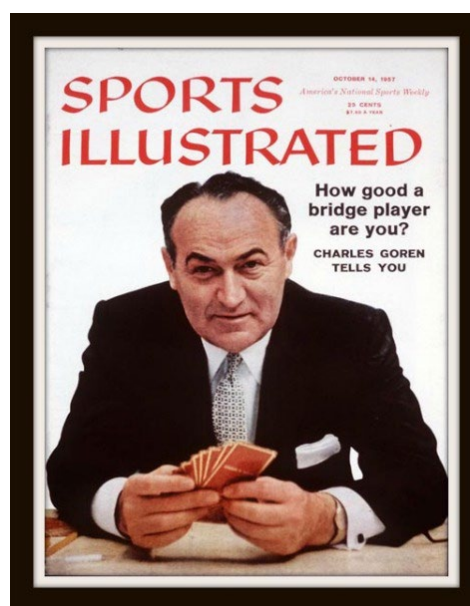
Note from the editor

The EBU biography of Markus begins, 'Ask any player who was the best woman bridge-player of all time in Europe, and top of the poll would be Rixi Markus' <https://www.ebu.co.uk/biographies/riximarkus>

Andrew's comment about her column reminds me of [a classic bridge reference](#) from The Simpsons:

Homer: [reading newspaper] (Laughs)
Marge: What are you reading, Homie?
Homer: The Bridge column. Heh heh heh heh heh. Oh, that South. You never know what he'll do next!

Goren is the foundation of the Standard American system we use in Australia. In particular, he repopularised the use of the High Card Point system in the 50s that was initially popularised by Milton Work. The HCP system was first published in 1915 by Bryant McCampbell in *Auction Tactics*.



Charles Goren

Chris Komarynsky

I started playing Bridge just before Covid hit, had two lessons, and then onto BBO. I used to play 500 in my final 2 years of High School, and my Father had been a card player, though not Bridge. My parents were refugees from Ukraine after WW II.

I moved to the Illawarra 10 years ago with my partner, Igor. We both, separately, had connections with Wollongong from High School. I had a friend who lived in Corrimal with her family in an old beach shack.

I always find it confusing when people ask me about my working life as I have had experience in many different areas, starting work in a factory. My first professional job was as a teacher in a High School in the western suburbs of Sydney. I've also worked at the Opera House, in the Legal profession, and at TAFE.

My first few years of Bridge, especially in unsupervised play, were very confusing! I still have nightmares of the first time I was 'X' (doubled) and 'XX' as I had no idea what it meant except that my partner and I were going to go down by a lot of points!!

Write your story

You don't have to wait till Rilla taps you on the shoulder – just write your story. Try answering these questions:

When and why did you learn bridge?

What have you done in your life for work or other hobbies?

What would it surprise other members to know about you?

What is your favourite bridge anecdote or memory?

Other great reads

ABF Newsletter

Do you get the ABF Newsletter? Apart from news about the ABF, it includes columns from some of Australia's leading players and writers, including Paul Lavings, Ron Klinger, Will Jenner-O'Shea, Barbara Travis and Brad Coles. To get it delivered to your inbox once every two months, simply fill in the online form here:

<https://abfevents.com.au/forms/signup/>

Bridging NSW

The Bridge NSW website has answers to almost any question about bridge in the State you can think of, including regular news stories.

The monthly newsletter, *Bridging NSW*, is a lot more community-focused than the ABF Newsletter with stories about clubs, players and congresses. If you aren't already receiving it, I suggest you register to be included on the email list here:

<https://bridgensw.com.au/subscribe/>



NSW (and Australia) Update

Several IBA members are actively involved in the administration of bridge in NSW. Helen Lavings sits on the Board of Bridge NSW as Treasurer, Marie Pickering and Dave Havyatt are members of the Clubs and Community Committee, while Ian Lisle and Dave Havyatt are members of the Directing Committee.

Beyond that, all players in NSW benefit from the change to Bridge NSW from the New South Wales Bridge Association delivering on its objectives.

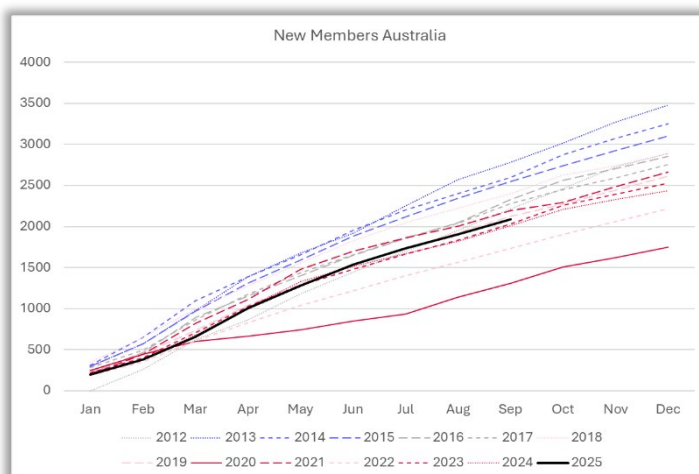
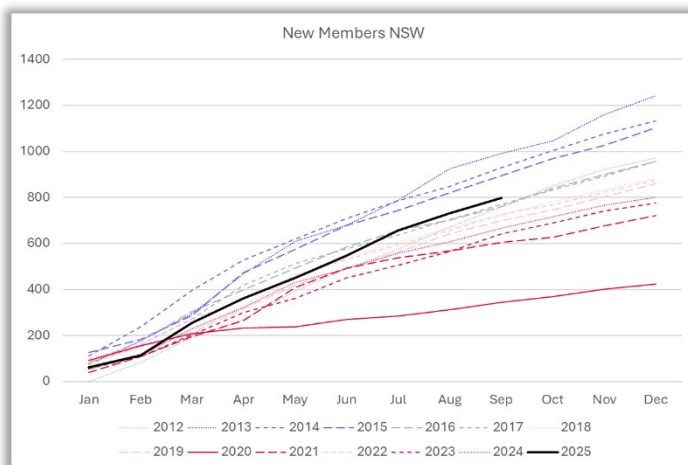
New players and growth

Bridge NSW's aims and objectives are headed by 'Growing the number of players' and 'Developing bridge player skills'. (see <https://bridgensw.com.au/bridge-nsw/strategy/>) Bridge NSW is having some success in the first goal. The two charts below show the cumulative number of new members in first NSW and then Australia in each calendar year since 2012. A 'new member' is identified as a player for whom an ABF number has been issued.

The first chart shows that in the year to September, NSW has signed up more new members than in any year since the high growth era of 2013-15. The second chart shows that Australia-wide the picture is not as rosy.

In an early survey of clubs, half the respondents did not provide any beginner classes. In pursuit of growth, Bridge NSW prioritised developing teaching resources for beginner classes. Steve English, with support from Rakesh Kumar and Derrick Browne, has developed a full introductory course (<https://bridgensw.com.au/lesson-materials/>) including handouts, slides, teacher notes, deal files and hand comments. This is supported by additional deal files for each topic.

Berry, one of our neighbouring clubs, has used these resources to commence beginner lessons. The latest issue of Bridging NSW has an interview with the club secretary, Cec Lewis, that describes their process.



This is welcome news for our region. It is also a reminder of the value of the work Jill MacRae, Marie Pickering and all their helpers do in running beginner lessons at IBA. Marie is currently recruiting additional teachers for the club.

IBA is unlikely to replace its teaching with the Bridge NSW version. However, players might benefit from having a look at it. Anyone can use these resources. If you had managed to get a group of people interested in bridge, but they couldn't make it to the club's lessons or were too uncertain, then you could use the Bridge NSW resources.

Steve English has added improver material as well.

Congresses and Spring Nationals

It is also pleasing to see that numbers at congresses are increasing. The table shows the number of pairs or teams participating in all completed congresses where the event was played this year and last. Most have had solid growth, while overall, 18% more teams played and 22% more pairs played. Not included are the number of players at returning congresses at Bateman's Bay and Great Lakes.

Congress		2024	2025	Change	Congress		2024	2025	Change
NSBC Online Summer Teams	Teams	18	22	22%	Newcastle Congress	Pairs	34	44	29%
SBC Aust Day MP Swiss Pairs	Pairs	52	62	19%		Teams	16	22	38%
NSBC Online Aust Day Swiss Pairs	Pairs	44	40	-9%	IBA Chris Diment	Pairs	54	68	26%
Grafton Online Butler Pairs	Pairs	66	66	0%		Teams	28	34	21%
IBA Swiss Pairs	Pairs	42	58	38%	NSBC Festival (multiple Events)	Teams	49	66	35%
NSBC Online Swiss Pairs	Pairs	36	44	22%		Pairs	46	144	213%
Wellington Bridge Club Congress	Pairs	26	24	-8%	Brisbane Water 'Super' Congress	Pairs	56	64	14%
	Teams	13	10	-23%		Teams	24	32	33%
Armidale Matchpoint Swiss Pairs	Pairs	28	34	21%	NSBC Winter Teams	Teams	16	14	-13%
Lindfield Pauline Evans Swiss	Pairs	34	56	65%	SBC Xmas in Winter	Pairs	34	46	35%
Pt Mcq-Hast March Congress	Pairs	40	48	20%		Teams	20	28	40%
	Teams	20	22	10%	Grafton Congress	Pairs	22	36	64%
Central Coast 'Super' Congress	Pairs	60	66	10%	Parkes Mini Teams	Teams	13	18	38%
	Teams	24	28	17%	NSBC @ EL Pairs	Pairs	30	58	93%
Sapphire Coast	Pairs	48	50	4%	Tomaree Congress	Pairs	50	68	36%
	Teams	24	26	8%		Teams	28	35	25%
Peninsula	Pairs	48	52	8%	Glen Pairs	Pairs	42	42	0%
	Teams	22	20	-9%	Cowra	Pairs	34	26	-24%
Ballina Swiss Pairs	Pairs	44	46	5%		Teams	14	13	-7%
Newcastle N/R Teams	Teams	14	22	57%	Pt Mcq-Hast Congress	Pairs	32	42	31%
Coffs Swiss Teams	Teams	18	17	-6%		Teams	14	20	43%
Bathurst	Pairs	38	42	11%	Mollymook	Pairs	58	52	-10%
	Teams	15	15	0%		Teams	28	22	-21%
Yamba Swiss Pairs	Yamba	32	32	0%	Hunters Hill Swiss Pairs	Pairs	40	42	5%
Wagga Wagga	Pairs	56	56	0%	CCLCBC Congress	Pairs	56	52	-7%
	Teams	26	27	4%		Teams	24	22	-8%
Nambucca Valley Swiss Pairs	Pairs	32	32	0%					

Sydney Spring Nationals is not currently showing the same growth. Three weeks out, the event had fewer than 90% of the participants in 2024. Most concerning are the registrations for the novice and restricted teams on 18 and 19 October. These events are already very keenly priced at \$130 compared to \$180 for Intermediate Teams.

The registrations for the Restricted and Novice pairs the following weekend also lag the Intermediate registrations by a significant margin.

Why do Novice and Restricted players flock to congresses across the state, but are reluctant to play at Spring Nationals?. Is it simply the fact that this is a National Gold Point event, which makes potential players see it as more challenging, even though they are the same categories? Or is it more to do with either the cost to play in Sydney or the specifics of Canterbury Racecourse as a venue? Helen, Marie or Dave would be interested in hearing your views.

Aussies at the World Bridge Teams Championships

The Australian Open, Women's, Seniors' and Mixed teams competed in the 47th World Bridge Teams Championships in Herning, Denmark, on 20-31 August. They were competing for the Bermuda Bowl, the Venice Cup, the d'Orsi Trophy and the Wuhan Cup, respectively. The Women's Team became the first Australian Team to make the quarter-finals of the Venice Cup.

The team came from three States and the ACT. Sue Lusk (SA), Therese Demarco (SA), Ella Jacob (NSW), Renee Cooper (WA), Jodi Tutty (ACT), Dagmar Neumann (NSW). Despite this first for Women's bridge, Australia's performance has not been as strong in recent times as it has in prior decades. Over the past nine months, an ABF Task Force has been examining how to deliver more consistent results internationally. They've presented a broad set of recommendations to the ABF Board. The ABF will be sharing their plans with the community over the coming months.

The latest ABF newsletter contains a nice thank you from the Australian Youth Team for the support they have been given by the Australian bridge community. I know several club members have made contributions in response to appeals at major events. Those who go to Gold Point events may well have played against some of these players – Aadhi Hariharan, with different partners, has beaten Maggie and me up on a couple of occasions.