



THE BRIDGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was clear to many of us right from the beginning that virtual bridge was here to stay. Once we had overcome our fear of the unknown and conquered the technical challenges of playing on BBO its big attraction was that we could continue to play bridge during COVID even though our clubs were forced to close. And of course there are lots of other aspects of virtual bridge that make it attractive and I won't bore you by listing them out as you already know what they are and it's what makes virtual bridge so popular.

But here's what I believe, virtual bridge might be a good imitation of the original but it's not the real thing. I was reminded of this fact quite forcibly when I recently played for our country in Italy. What a pleasure to play against real people with real cards at real tables! I had forgotten how much I missed this. Bridge is a game of skill but it is also a social game and virtual bridge has all but stripped that side away from us. Digressing for a moment isn't this one of the great advantages of playing games, is that it teaches us social skills? Isn't that one of our worries for our grandchildren, that they are hooked on playing games on their laptops and cell phones and are losing their ability to interact with one another? Are we becoming guilty of that too?

Once again our present circumstances dictate that our national congress will be held online. I hope this proves to be for the last time. And I wonder how many of our other major national social events, Greyville, Oyster Festival, Outeniqua and the Cape Festival, will survive the threat that virtual bridge presents?

We have to find a way where real and virtual bridge can flourish side by side, but what was not obvious to me back then but is clear to me now, is that if we are too scared or too lazy or too mean to return to our clubs then one of these days we will have no clubs to return to.

James Grant

IN THIS ISSUE

From The President

The Bermuda Bowl

Puzzles

Ranking Achievements

Bermuda Bowl Final

The Bridge Lounge

Solutions

THE BERMUDA BOWL

After a number of postponements, the Bermuda Bowl was finally held in Salsomaggiore in Italy. Salsomaggiore was famous back in the day for its thermal baths and drew crowds from around the country throughout the year. Its popularity was such that it boasts its own railway line, an offshoot of the Milan/Bologna railway. It also has its own cultural centre, the home of theatre, music and other refined entertainments. Many of the rich visitors built a second home here and as a town it flourished. Alas, spas are no longer the attraction they were in yesteryear and many of the large homes have been abandoned or converted into hotels which in turn have been closed and abandoned. Although now derelict, these buildings still retain an echo of their former beauty and some of the magic of past times still lingers on in this less lively and now a little jaded town.

But let's talk about bridge. Larry and I had our successes, failures and near misses in this tournament. Here is one of my favourites:

Bidding

Dealer North
All vul

East	W	N	E	S
♠ AJ9		3D	4H	5C
♥ KJ1076532	dbl	pass	pass	5D
♦ 3	6H	all pass		
♣ 2				

I don't have a good feeling about this as my hand could be much better for my overcall, and good cards in clubs won't help me, it's the major suits that I need shoring up. I wait to see what dummy holds with some trepidation.

South leads a small diamond and dummy goes down with

West

♠ Q10853
♥ AQ
♦ 9
♣ AQJ65

East

♠ AJ9
♥ KJ1076532
♦ 3
♣ 2

North wins this with the ace. Who holds the ♦K? Probably his partner but not the queen but then the advantage of winning the first trick against a small slam is you can afford to false card to your heart's content (please excuse the pun). North now goes into a huddle, and I go into a separate huddle. This isn't the worst slam I've played in; if North holds the ♠K I'm home and dry, but if he doesn't is there any hope? And what am I to make of the 5C bid? Is it

- a. I have a long club suit partner (but clearly not 7 as North would surely have doubled the slam for a club lead) and good diamond support so take this into account if they bid a slam
- b. I have a long club suit and if they don't double 6 off should be a good score
- c. I'm having a laugh?

North cannot hold both black kings else he would be far too strong for his opening bid, but he has room for holding one of them. If he holds neither he will switch to spades as if I hold the top two cards in this suit there is no hope for the defence. If he holds the ♠K he will switch to a trump for if his partner holds the jack a spade switch would be catastrophic. But if he holds the ♣K? By now he has no doubt worked out that I hold at most 4 cards in the black suits and the only dangerous holding for the defence is when I hold a singleton club. If he holds 3 or 4 clubs to the king then a heart switch is needed to prevent me from setting up this suit for 2 discards in spades. But if he holds a singleton or doubleton king then I think he will exit with a spade.

As I feared North finally comes out of his huddle and plays the ♣7. Let's check our logic again, does he have the ♠K? I don't think so, but perhaps he has deduced I hold the ♠J along with the ace and I will now adopt a losing line of play based on the assumption that his partner holds the king? Or it might be a double bluff, he doesn't hold the king but I might believe he's bluffing so I take the losing finesse? Or perhaps it's a triple bluff? There's a character called Vizzini in a fairy story, *The Princess Bride*, who prides himself on out bluffing his adversaries – am I playing against his Uruguayan equivalent? I don't think so, so I play my ace. Now it's all down to the club suit. Did South psyche? Maybe, possibly, probably. I can still make this contract if North holds the king if I play him for a singleton or doubleton. Or I could play for the king coming down in 3...

Whatever I choose to do now I will need the hearts to break Do I play South for a long club suit headed by the king, or North a short club suit headed by the king? If the former there is a simple squeeze I can execute and this seems to me a much more promising and attractive line of play. So I draw all the trumps and on the last trump come down to this 4 card ending:

West

♠ Q
♥ -
♦ -
♣ AQJ

South

♠ K
♥ -
♦ -
♣ Kxx

North

immaterial

East

♠ J9
♥ 2
♦ -
♣ 2

On the last trump South is squeezed, he has to hold on to the ♠K so must let go of a club. I let go of the ♠Q from dummy and finesse the clubs.

Here is the full hand:

West

♠ Q10853
♥ AQ
♦ 9
♣ AQJ65

South

♠ K62
♥ 84
♦ KJ542
♣ 874

North

♠ 74
♥ 9
♦ AQ10876
♣ K1093

East

♠ AJ9
♥ K10976532
♦ 3
♣ 2

North won this trick and the defence claimed the remainder of the tricks. Who said bridge was an easy game? But despite this hand and others much worse, the experience of playing in this event was inspirational. I left with a great desire to find ways of lifting the level of all aspects of my game to a higher level. And more importantly even when it became clear we had no chance of qualifying in the last eight our team spirit remained high and we had a lot of fun together. I felt proud and privileged to be part of it.

James Grant

SABF WEBSITE

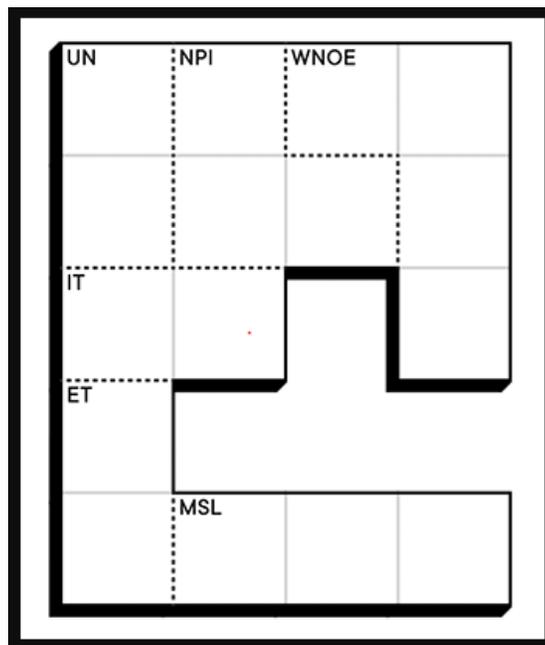


The SABF Website has undergone an update and can be viewed by visiting <http://sabf.co.za/>.

PUZZLES

Have you tried Knotwords? Essentially a crossword puzzle, you're given all the letters and need to create words both down and across much like a combination of Sudoku and Kakuro. Try your luck with this one.

Remember, the letters in the block need to be used in their respective section to create words.



RANKING ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to our players who've risen in the rankings recently!

Name	New Rank	Club
Judith De Marigny	Regional Master	BBO Club
Peta Feinstein	National Life Master	The Links Bridge Club
Anneke Furniss	National Master	Two Hearts
Gill Greenwood	National Master	Western Cape
Joyce Hessen	National Life Master	Western Cape
Greg Hingle	Grandmaster	Hillbrow
Rinda Jacobs	National Master	Western Cape
Riekie Louw	National Master	Western Cape
Neil MacLeod	Regional Master	KZNBC
Adrian Mauerberger	Regional Master	Western Cape
Barbara May	Regional Master	Plettenberg Bay Bridge Club
Louise Mcintosh	Regional Master	KZN Midlands
Darryl Moss	Regional Master	Pretoria
Mark Oliff	Grandmaster	Durban
Alison Puggia	National Master	Port Elizabeth
Karen Rothbart	Regional Master	The Links Bridge Club
Judy Rothschild	Regional Master	Western Cape
Machelle Shapiro	Life Master	Western Cape
Betty Slowatek	Regional Master	The Links Bridge Club

The complete list of promotions may be viewed on the [SABF website](#).

THE BERMUDA BOWL FINAL

The final of the World Championships (where South Africa ended in 18th place) was a very tight battle between the Netherlands and Pierre Zimmermann's Swiss squad. I won't really say "Switzerland", since Zimmermann was the only Swiss national in the team. His partner was Fernando Piedra, who is originally from Uruguay but has lived in Switzerland for 27 years. Fair enough. However, the other two pairs in the team were hired professionals: Dutch players Bas Drijver - Sjoert Brink and Poles Michal Klukowski - Piotr Gawrys (those of you with a good memory might remember Gawrys from a congress in the Drakensberg many years ago). They only needed a 2-year break from international bridge before they could play for their "new" country - a controversial WBF rule, to put it mildly. During the pandemic, there were no international championships, so they could basically move from their respective national teams to the Swiss team without any penalty.

The final board in set 4 proved decisive. Take Sjoert Brink's seat and see if you can win the World Championships:

W	N	E	S
P	P	3♥	?

S	BRINK
♠	A52
♥	AK4
♦	KQ1087
♣	104

They are vulnerable, you are not. What is your plan?

You might consider passing at this vulnerability, since you do collect 100 points per undertrick with no guarantee that you can make anything your way. However, it is relatively safe to bid, since you won't be doubled even if partner is very weak. Bas Drijver tried 3NT and everyone passed:

N	DRIJVER
♠	K104
♥	52
♦	J943
♣	K862
♣3	
S	BRINK
♠	A52
♥	AK4
♦	KQ1087
♣	104

West led a 3rd/5th ♣3. It was disappointing that he didn't lead his partner's suit - then you could have knocked out the ♦A first and later played a club towards your King for the 9th trick. Now, it looks like the opponents might set up 4 club tricks to go with their ♦A. Is there anything you can do about it?

You might consider going up with ♣K at trick one, but for that to succeed, you will need East to have ♣QJ, ♣Q9 or ♣J9 - then the suit will be blocked for the opponents. But that is a long shot, and immediately fatal if East has ♣A. Besides, if East has ♣Q9 or ♣J9, you have two stoppers in the suit by ducking the first trick anyway. So you duck in dummy, and East wins ♣J. This happens next:

N	DRIJVER
♠	K104
♥	52
♦	J943
♣	K862
♣5 ♣Q	
♣10	
S	BRINK
♠	A52
♥	AK4
♦	KQ1087
♣	104

Aargh! East obviously started with ♣QJ bare, and going up with the ♣K at trick one would have been the winning play. What now?

If East has ♦A, you have 9 easy tricks by winning the ♣K, but you can be almost sure that West has the ♦A. Otherwise, he would probably not have led a club without a side entry, and he might also have won this trick if he sees that there is no hope in the clubsuit. But if you duck now, where is your ninth trick going to come from?

Brink couldn't be sure, but he knew that winning this trick would set up 5 tricks for the opponents, so he ducked. East now switched to ♥Q. Duck or win this trick?

You have to take this trick - otherwise the opponents will already have 3 tricks and two more Aces to come. Brink won and led ♦Q from his hand. West thought for quite some time, then won the ♦A and continued with another diamond, East following suit.

What is going on? Do you know the opponents' distribution by now?

You should. West must have a singleton heart, otherwise he would have continued hearts. You know he started with 2 diamonds and 5 clubs, so his distribution must be 5125, which means that East is 2722.

Thus, these cards are left:

	N DRIJVER ♠ K104 ♥ 5 ♦ J4 ♣ K8	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	P	3♥	3NT	P	P	P			
	W	N	E	S												
P	P	3♥	3NT													
P	P	P														
<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>E</th> </tr> <tr> <td>VAN LANKVE</td> <td>VAN DEN BO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♠ XXXXX</td> <td>♠ XX</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥</td> <td>♥ J109863</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦</td> <td>♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ A97</td> <td>♣</td> </tr> </table>	W	E	VAN LANKVE	VAN DEN BO	♠ XXXXX	♠ XX	♥	♥ J109863	♦	♦	♣ A97	♣	S BRINK ♠ A52 ♥ K4 ♦ K107 ♣	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>3NT S</td> <td>NS: 2 EW: 3</td> </tr> </table>	3NT S	NS: 2 EW: 3
W	E															
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♠ XXXXX	♠ XX															
♥	♥ J109863															
♦	♦															
♣ A97	♣															
3NT S	NS: 2 EW: 3															

What do you think Brink did now?

He played a small heart from both hands. When West discarded a spade, *he claimed 9 tricks.*

Do you see what will happen next? East wins and can play a spade, but Brink goes up with the Ace and cashes his red winners. When the last diamond hits the table....

D 32	N DRIJVER	W N E S
	♠ K10 ♥ ♦ ♣ K	P P 3♥ 3NT P P P
W VAN LANKVE	♦8	E VAN DEN BO
♠ XX ♥ ♦ ♣ A		♠ X ♥ J10 ♦ ♣
	S BRINK	3NT S
	♠ 52 ♥ ♦ ♣	

...West has no card to spare. Whatever he discards, dummy discards the opposite suit and takes the last two tricks.

That was 7 IMPs to Switzerland when South made 2NT at the other table. If you passed 3♥, it will go all pass and you collect 2 down for a 2 IMP gain. However, that would not have been enough, since Switzerland won the final 167-164.

Could West have defeated the contract by returning a spade when in with the ♦A?

Well, not this time, since the cards lay so favourably for you that you would have made the contract even if you had never heard of a squeeze:

D 32	N DRIJVER	W N E S
	♠ K104 ♥ 52 ♦ J943 ♣ K862	P P 3♥ 3NT P P P
W VAN LANKVE		E VAN DEN BO
♠ 98763 ♥ 7 ♦ A2 ♣ A9753		♠ QJ ♥ QJ109863 ♦ 65 ♣ QJ
	S BRINK	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0
	♠ A52 ♥ AK4 ♦ KQ1087 ♣ 104	

With ♠QJ dropping, nine tricks are there for the taking as long as you duck the second club. But that takes nothing away from Sjoert Brink's excellent declarer play.

Leif-Erik Stabell

THE BRIDGE LOUNGE

When you have a very long suit and some moderate values, should you immediately pre-empt as high as possible, or should you rather go slowly by keeping the bidding low to start so that you can see who does what, and then decide whether or not to bid again?

In an International Teams match between France and Poland, though the same contract was reached in both rooms, we saw the two philosophies in action.

Dir: South Vul: NS		♠ 85	
		♥ AJ74	
		♦ K3	
		♣ AJ1097	
♠ Q976	♠ K3		
♥ 10986	♥ Q		
♦ 42	♦ AQJ98765		
♣ 852	♣ Q3		
	♠ AJ1042		
	♥ K532		
	♦ 10		
	♣ K64		

West	North	East	South
			1♠
P	2♣	2♦	2♥
P	4♥	5♦	P
P	Dbl	All Pass	

Opening Lead: 3♥

The French East tried the slow approach, bidding 2D and then 5D. With four top losers, the defence just had to stop declarer getting to dummy with the queen of spades to take the diamond finesse. Declarer ruffed the second heart and advanced the three of spades, but an alert South did well by rising with the ace and switching to clubs. Now declarer couldn't get to dummy, and a diamond

had to be lost, for three off and 500 to Poland.

At the other table, I thought the Polish East did much better, and I thoroughly approve of his decision to jump immediately to 5D, which was doubled by North.

The 2D bid at the first table, was, in my opinion, a shocker. You're almost certain to end up having to bid 5D anyway, with an eight card suit at favourable vul, so why mess around? All that the low level bid does is allow the opponents to exchange some valuable information. South gets all the room in the world to pass or jump or support partner. Even worse, if you chose 2D and then heard your lho jump to 4NT, you would do anything to go back again and blow him away with a 5D pre-empt, wiping out three rounds of bidding and removing his ability to use Blackwood. Really, there is virtually nothing to be gained by adopting the slow approach.

The French defence wasn't up to par either. Clubs were led and continued, with declarer ruffing the third round. Now he put South on the spot by leading the king of spades. Concerned that this was a singleton, South grabbed it and switched to hearts. But now the queen of spades was an entry to the table to take the diamond finesse, which meant only two down, for 300, and a 5 imp swing to Poland.

About the Author

Jeff Sapire, a top-class bridge-player in his own right, has represented South Africa. He teaches all levels – beginner, intermediate and advanced. To find out more about his well-structured and informative lessons, contact him on jeffshirl@telkomsa.net, or call him on 082 551 2526.

SOLUTIONS

