

March 2019 Newsletter

Editorial

The Wellington Bridge Club, unlike many sports and activity clubs around Aotearoa, is in rude good health. This is partly because we have had an excellent history of offering lessons, which has been the conduit to supplying new members. But there is no denying that if you look around, there is a sea of white and grey hair. Our club, the Regional Committee and NZ Bridge have numerous programmes to do something about refreshing the club. It is vital for the longevity of the club.

On February 24, WBC hosted a successful novice tournament set up by NZ Bridge Wellington Region. Co-ordinator Katherine Gough, said the stars were all novice players who attended. Emma Holland and Caroline Hull (pictured) of WBC were East-West winners. There is a session for novices at next month's Regional Congress plus an intermediate pairs and teams event is scheduled. Kairangi Club is holding a novice and intermediate tournament on March 24. WBC has started the first set of this year's lessons and a this year plans a second set starting May 21. We are also going to run a block day-time lessons this year. At this month's committee meeting it was agreed to launch a new initiative based in secondary schools.

So it is clear that the committee and others in our club are fully cognisant of the need for reinvigoration. We know there is always more that could be done, but we are working on it.

- Simon Louisson



Dope tests coming to Wellington Bridge Club

Just kidding. But The Guardian reported this month that the world No.1 Geir Helgemo of Norway has been suspended after failing a drug test.

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/mar/01/world-no1-bridge-player-suspended-after-failing-a-drugs-test-geir-helgemo> Helgemo tested positive for non-performance enhancing synthetic testosterone and the female fertility drug clomifene at a World Bridge Series event in Orlando in September. After accepting he had breached anti-doping rules, Helgemo was suspended by the World Bridge Federation (WBF) until November and was stripped of all titles and medals from the 2018 World Bridge Series.

The World Bridge Federation (WBF) is recognised by the International Olympic Committee and as such abides by World Anti-Doping Agency rules.



Disgraceful!

The Sociology of bridge

Researchers at Scotland's University of Stirling are using bridge to develop an academic discipline called the Sociology of Bridge. The University has launched a campaign to establish the new field of study, which explores how playing Bridge encourages wellbeing, healthy ageing and social connections.

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/news/2019/02/classic-card-game-to-bridge-the-gap-between-play-and-study/> It is hoped the research will highlight the benefits and skills that playing Bridge provides, including promoting focus and clear thinking, helping to alleviate stress and boosting self-esteem.

Wellington Sixes set to make its debut

The Wellington Sixes one-day tournament, based on Swiss Pairs format, is due to make its debut on Saturday with twelve teams each made up of a junior, intermediate and senior pair entered. The emphasis for this tournament is on fun with prize for most imaginatively dressed. The flavour of the day can be garnered from the names of teams entered – the Autumn Fruits, the Weak Twos, the Midnight Cowboys and an Indian, the Mad Hatters, and the Happy Hatters.

NZ Herald feature

The NZ Herald recently ran a feature on how playing bridge keeps people smarter, happier and more social into old age.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz-herald-in-depth/news/article.cfm?c_id=1504170&objectid=12210489 Herald reporter Laurilee McMichael said it used to be accepted that as you got older, your brain power faded. She referenced the University of Stirling research (noted above) that showed playing bridge alongside other brain activities such as crosswords can help stave off brain decay.

The Stirling study revealed playing bridge keeps people smarter, happier and more social into old age. The study also indicated that people who play bridge have higher levels of wellbeing than those who don't. In addition, the game and its social environment has the potential to maintain good health, through increased positive cognitive, social and quality of life outcomes.

Get your President's Cup team together

Time to start organising your President's Cup teams. Remember, the Thursday event starting on April, 4 now offers a new prize open to all grades so long as your four members do not have more than 12 points by grade score (Your score is in the Bridge Book with Juniors on 1 and Open players on 4). This is an initiative to encourage more teams so a team with out-of-grade players can still win a prize. The regular President's Cup will still be presented to the best Thursday nighters' team.

Katherine Gough katherine.gough@nzbridge.co.nz 027 2433495

PUT IT IN YOUR DIARY

Wellington Region Tournaments

Paraparaumu Open 5A – Sunday, March 17
Masterton Open 5A – Sunday, March 24
Kairangi Intermediate/Junior 5B/3B – Sunday March 24
Victoria Multigrade Pairs 8B – Sunday April 7
South Wairarapa Intermediate/Junior 5B/3B – Sunday April 14
Regional Mixed Pairs Open (Karori) 3A – Monday (Easter) April 22
Wellington Regional Congress, All Grades – April 25-28

Club series

Tuesday/Junior – Morley/Bennett Ladder – starts April 2
Thursday/Intermediate – Presidents Cup Teams – starts April 4
Wednesday/Open – Paul Titcombe Lowe & Co Premier Teams Prelim – Starts April 10
Wednesday/Open – Jubilee Cup Pairs – starts April 17

Recent triumphs

Club Series

Tuesday

Martin Jug Pairs

1st Rupert Rokeby-Johnson & Annie Fleetwood
2nd Karen Hann & Vivienne Revell

Wednesday

Charles Wilson Memorial Pairs

1st David May & Simon Louissou
2nd Karl Hayes & Peter Benham

Thursday

Brian Willis Memorial Pairs

1st Cheryl Scott & Chris Woods (pictured right)
2nd Stefan Prentice & Sushila Kumar

Friday

Afternoon Duplicate Ladder

1st Mira Trifunovic
2nd Peter Benham

2



Tournaments

Gold Coast Congress

A Final of Restricted Pairs

2nd Maciej Szczesny and Mariusz Tumiłowicz.

3rd Sam Ward and Julia Barnett

B Final Restricted Pairs

1st Brad Tattersfield & Jan Borren

2nd Graeme Dick and Margaret Dick

Restricted Swiss Pairs

2nd Jenni Borren & partner Marg Robbie

Hutt Club Multi Grade

1st Nigel Kearney and Tegan Bennik (pictured)

2nd Denise Barnett and Peter Benham

3rd Maciej Szczesny and Mariusz Tumiłowicz.

Top Junior Pair Paul Devadatta and Rob Egginson

Top Intermediate Pair Jim and Margot Brough



Taranaki Congress

Open Pairs

1st Alan Grant & John Skipper

Swiss Pairs

2nd Alan Grant & John Skipper

Open Teams

2nd Kate Davies John Patterson, Annette Henry & Stephen Henry

3rd Dean Sole Patrick D'Arcy Graeme Norman & Peter Delahunty

Kapi Mana Multi-Grade

1st Chris Bolland & Luke Kelly

2nd Don Mather & Yvonne Helps

3rd & Top Open/Intermediate Pair Suzanne Duncan & Graham Potter

Top Open Junior Pair Pam Hancox & Helen Climo

Top Intermediate Pair Sandie Lepper & Andrew Smith

Time to start planning for Wellington Regional Congress

Easter is not far away and now is the time to plan for the Wellington Congress on April 25-28. This is a really well organised fun event. There is a lot of emphasis on junior and intermediates where contestants will be playing against players of their own grade. If you are not playing, any chance you can help in the kitchen? Also, we need items for the raffle.

More lessons starting in May

While the year's well-attended first set of lessons already under way, we are already planning for the second block starting on May 21. Send emails to any of your friends or contacts who you think might be interested. This is a big part of how we reinvigorate the club.



Library up and running – now we need a librarian

Our library is up and running thanks to Julie Hawkins. We now need a successor to Julie to manage it.

Mike Murtagh has done an excellent job doing the annual stock-take/audit, which has taken quite a few hours over several days. Mike writes:

It's great that an increasing number of members are borrowing books and we need to ensure the system Julie established runs smoothly. The annual audit is near completion. About 15 titles are still to be located and Inspector Poirot is on the case. Some of these titles may have been borrowed without an entry being made in the issues book. One certainly has. Klinger's 'Bridge Conventions, Defences and Countermeasures' can't be found. We know it was back on the shelves at end of January but now it is on the missing list. If you have it please put it back.

It's been a popular book but there are others available that cover conventions in a comprehensive way. Brian Senior's 'Conventions Today' is recommended. He points out the strengths and weaknesses of the most popular conventions relative to the alternatives available. He's a good, clear writer. Two of his pamphlets, on fourth suit forcing, and on balancing, are so in our library. How do you treat the 1C, 1D; 1H, 1S sequence? What about an 11-15 HCP's 1NT in the balancing position after 1C and two passes? If you use a wide ranging 1NT, 'Conventions Today' has some suggestions for the next round of bidding. You don't have to read about bridge to be a good bridge player but it can add to the enjoyment.

The three titles above are all part of the Dougal McLean bequest. His collection and other titles gifted and purchased recently have made a huge difference to our library. So take a look and borrow a book but make sure you use the issues book correctly and return the borrowed book as soon as you have finished with it.

Volunteer of the month

Mike Murtagh has been selected as our volunteer of the month for his work put in on the library. Many thanks Mike – it's people like you who make our club what it is.

Subs

Three quarters of us have paid our subs but a quarter of you have payments overdue. Pay up promptly please of the kneecappers will be around to yours!

Tea maker required

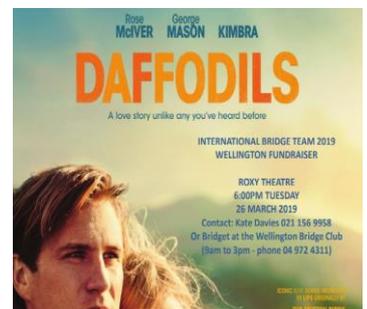
Tea person needed for Friday afternoon. Do you know anyone who lives nearby who wants to earn a few bucks as our Friday afternoons tea person. Let Bridget know.

Our intrepid police have a chance to redeem themselves

Having failed to cover themselves with glory over the theft our copper pipes, our boys and girls in blue have a chance to redeem themselves now that these low life scrap thieves struck again. Again, these brazen thieves have been caught on camera. After being shown our newsletter detailing how impressed we were with their previous efforts (not), the cops have shown more interest this time but we were are not holding our breath for a result.

Don't forget the fund raiser for our international stars

A film fund-raiser (Daffodils) will be held on March 26th at the Roxy will be held to support international players, including Annette and Stephen Henry, Kate Davies and John Patterson and Alan Grant travel later in the year to an international tournament they have been selected for. Tickets costing \$25 are available from Kate or Bridget



Ensure you enter and arrive on time

It was only by luck that a team wasn't sent home when the Open Andrew Thompson Memorial Teams event started. One team thought the team was entered, but hadn't, while another hadn't entered. Luckily there was an even number of teams but it did create a major hassle for the directors which is why everyone was kept waiting while the scoring system was rejigged. Similarly, don't think you are too important for the directors to refuse you entry if you are not seated by 7.20pm as required. The directors have been given their riding instructions so don't moan that you weren't warned!

Planning and inferences on hand shape – Nigel Kearney

At the Hutt Multigrade on March 3 I picked up this hand. LHO opened 1D, Tegan doubled and RHO passed.

864

AJ106

KQ82

94

I chose to respond 2H to the takeout double. This shows values (around 8-11) and is not forcing. It's perfectly ok to do this with a four card suit because partner's double promises at least three hearts, or a strong hand on which she will bid again. That means we are in at worst a 4-3 fit which is fine at the two level, with the short trump hand able to get a ruff or two. A 1H response would be weaker than this. Tegan raised to 4H and LHO led the three of clubs. This was the dummy:

K1097

KQ84

64

AK10

Counting tricks, there are two clubs, and I expect LHO to have the missing aces so I can get one diamond and a spade. That means I will want six tricks from trumps. Maybe I can establish a second spade but the timing for that is awkward because I'll need to draw all the trumps first and entries to my hand are limited.

An important point to consider is that LHO has a minimum opening but did not open a 12-14 1NT. So her hand will not be balanced. That significantly increases the chance of a poor break in either spades or trumps. Also, LHO will have five diamonds unless precisely 4144.

Ruffing two diamonds in dummy looks like the best option. I will need to ruff high twice but I have good trumps in my hand after that. There are some traps to watch out for:

1. I need to get my spade trick as early as possible. When ruffing diamonds I don't want RHO to discard spades and later ruff my king of spades. If RHO is 2425 and LHO 4153, even one diamond ruff before the king of spades is established and cashed could be fatal.
2. I have to lose the lead twice, once in spades and once in diamonds. Assuming opponents will lead back trumps both times, I cannot afford to play even one round myself.
3. If RHO has four trumps, I should ruff a club in hand. Then my AJ10 will be good after two high ruffs in dummy. If I don't ruff a club early enough and RHO started with 97xx I could lose one at the end.

I win in dummy and play a diamond at trick two. LHO takes my king with the ace and leads another club. LHO's carding suggests the club lead was not a doubleton so I win, then ruff a club low and lead a spade to the king which holds. Only now I play another diamond and fortunately RHO follows. At this point I can claim: I have five tricks already plus a high diamond ruff in dummy, heart to my 10, another high ruff, and I will still have the AJ of hearts.

There is nothing fancy in this hand but it illustrates the importance of thinking carefully and having a plan. Plenty of people don't do this as shown by the fact that +620 was worth 97% of the matchpoints.

Conference for all aspiring bridge teachers

The Wellington Bridge Club is hosting a NZ Bridge conference for any aspiring bridge teacher on Friday evening, August 16.

The Conference will cover really important topics and is an important place for teachers and others to share experiences and learn off each other. The Conference itself is free to all attendees though NZ Bridge hopes that clubs and Regions will assist in the travel and accommodation costs of their members who wish to attend. It may be possible to arrange billets on the Friday night if requested. For queries, please contact Richard Solomon on 09-232 8494 or richard.solomon@nzbridge.co.nz

