



Table Talk Dec 2023

News from the Wanaka Bridge Club

From the new President

Here we are at the end of another year. It was lovely to see many of you at the AGM/ Prize-giving. Welcome to the 2024 committee: Jane Hamilton, Cathy Andrews, Andrew Shaw, Tracey Gieck, Lyn Hill, Sally Jackways, Bridget McCaughan, Murray Pryde, Marc Simmonds and Ann-Louise Stokes as an adviser We have had our first meeting and jobs have been allocated.

A lot of us work and have other commitments so if you are at the club and see that something needs doing, please go ahead and sort eg washing tablecloths, making up the table baskets, tidying up the trolley, untangling the charger cords, making sure all bridge pads are plugged in and cleaning up the kitchen at the end of the night. These are all small jobs that need done and any help would be appreciated.

The bridge book is almost at the publishers and we will send it out early in the new year. The programme for 2024 is now on the website.

I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year and look forward to seeing you all at the bridge table in 2024.

Cheers, Heather.

Programme: Jan 2024

Monday:
Kingsway Stakes from Jan 15

Tuesday:
Restarts on Feb 13

Wednesday:
Clutha Pairs from Jan 17. The Hall is not available on Jan 31, so this will conclude in February.

Friday:
Restarts on Feb 2

Other Tournaments

Also coming up:

Jan 5-6: Alexandra Holiday Pairs
Jan 13: Otago/Southland Swiss Pairs (Invercargill)
Jan 28: Otago Festival Pairs (Otago BC)

Championship Pairs 2024

The motion to reduce the number of Championship Pairs nights to nine, with a minimum of seven nights played was debated at the AGM and decisively rejected on a show of hands. Therefore, Championship Pairs will continue to be played over twelve nights.

Library

As you will see if you look at the "Resources" page on the Club's website, we have an extensive library of bridge books. Due to a lack of space at the Church, these are sitting in Ken Roberts' shed. Nevertheless, we will be encouraging members to read them, and will be bringing them to the Club on

request. Please contact Lyn Hill (0274 502587) if you're interested.

Friday Bridge

The number one issue with our new premises that is brought up by members is a lack of a social side to bridge at the Church. On the final Friday of the year members were invited to Cinema Paradiso to have drinks and nibbles. This was so well received that it will be a permanent fixture next year.



Membership

New Members:

A warm welcome to this year's novices,

Anna Allen

Pamela Cullen

Neesh Ellis

Polly Foster

Nancy Latham

Jo Lewis

Lynley Lischner

Pam Mayo

Richard Pears

Lisa Sproat

Kim Tilly

Gina Treadwell

Hannah Walker

Tyson Walker

And also to returning member,

Sharon Wilson

Unblocking 101

For the last Tuesday morning session of the year, on 28 November, Heather Wellman ran a fun session where every hand had to be played in NT. Deals with at most 22 points held by the stronger pair were played in 1NT, otherwise the contract was 3NT. Many of the resulting contracts were completely unmakeable but nobody was worried: prizes were awarded, and everybody had fun.

One of the more bizarre contracts was on Board 9, with North becoming declarer in 3NT:

		♠ AQ9653		Dir: N	
		♥ AQT		Vul: E-W	
		♣ J983			
♠ AQT97653	♠ KJ82				
♥ 8	♥ KJ7				
♦ 862	♦ K93				
♣ 4	♣ T76				
	♠ 4				
	♥ T42				
	♦ J754				
	♣ AKQ52				
13					
6	11				
10					
Par: 400					
				♣♦♥♠ N	
				N 534--	
				S 434--	
				E ---3-	
				W ---3-	

Four of the five Easts led a spade, won by West's ace and revealing to the world that N/S held twelve spades between them. Declarer still had to learn that the suit broke 8-4 but from EW's perspective the lie of the spades was an open book. On lead at Trick 2, West could confidently expect her side to win the first eight tricks.

But there's a catch. EW will cash eight spade tricks **only if the fourth round of the suit is won by West**. If East wins the fourth trick she has no way to get back to the West hand, and the remaining four established spades will wither on the vine.

To avoid this debacle both partners must cooperate to ensure that West is on lead at Trick 5. This requires them to **unblock** the suit by one or both players winning a trick with an unnecessarily high card. For example, after West wins the opening lead and realises that N/S have none left, she should exit with a small spade to pass the lead back to East. Any card East plays can potentially win the third round of the suit, but the last thing East wants is to be left holding the bare king at Trick 4. To avoid any chance of this happening East should simply play her spades from the top down, and – equally importantly – West must overtake East's last spade with one of the higher cards in her hand so she can cash her remaining four spades.

Unblocking is an important technique for declarer as well as for the defence, but it is usually easier for declarer – who can see all of her side's assets – to figure it out. Kudos to Jane Medway and Tracey Geick who scored a well-earned 100% on the board by being the only pair to find the correct defence.